CORPUS CULTUS IOVIS SABAZII (CCIS), III

CONCLUSIONS

ÉTUDES PRÉLIMINAIRES AUX RELIGIONS ORIENTALES DANS L'EMPIRE ROMAIN

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WITH 2 PLATES

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CONTENTS

Preface VII
Bibliography of works cited by abbreviation IX

I. The history of the cult before the time of Augustus 1

II. Other divinities with whom Sabazius is identified or associated .. 11

III. The symbols of Sabazius; the practices of the cult 23

IV. The cult in the Roman empire; who worshipped Sabazius and why 38

V. The problem of the literary sources..... 49

Addenda and corrigenda to *CCIS* I and II..... 61

Appendix: Sabazius and the so-called snake-vessels..... 64

Index of selected words, names, and topics..... 66

Plates I-II

PREFACE

This volume represents the third and last part of the work on Sabazius originally projected by the late Prof. Vermaseren and myself. It includes those conclusions which, in my opinion, can be firmly based on the evidence gathered and presented by us in the first two volumes of the set. Speculation is avoided, as there seems already to have been altogether too much of it in the study of Sabazius-cult.

For the additional photos, I wish to thank the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, and the Cyprus Department of Antiquities, especially Drs. Vassos Karageorghis and Pavlos Florentzos. Thanks go also to the Research Council of the University of Missouri-Columbia, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the American Philosophical Society for financial aid which helped with travel during my Sabbatical year 1986/7. Lastly, thanks go to Dr.Rudolf Fellmann of Basel for help with the matter of the snake-vessels.

Eugene N. Lane

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS CITED BY ABBREVIATION

(Standard reference works and corpora are excluded)

AJA	American Journal of Archaeology, Baltimore etc. 1885-
AM	Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Athenische Mitteilungen, Stuttgart etc. 1876-
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, Berlin and New York 1972-
BABesch	Bulletin antieke beschaving, The Hague 1926-
JfAC	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Münster 1958-
JHS	Journal of Hellenic Studies, London 1880-
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies, London, 1911-
Lane, *CMRDM*	Corpus Monumentorum Religionis Dei Menis, Leiden 1971-1979
ÖJh	Österreichisches archäologisches Institut, Jahreshefte, Vienna 1898-
RDAC	Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus, Nicosia 1933-
RGVV	Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten, Giessen etc. 1903-

CHAPTER ONE

THE HISTORY OF THE CULT BEFORE THE TIME OF AUGUSTUS

The origins of the cult of Sabazius lie shrouded in obscurity. For the earliest author to mention him, Aristophanes, he is undoubtedly Phrygian,[1] although one of Aristophanes' characters, at the beginning of the *Wasps*, in his inability to distinguish between Phrygian and Median, seems to point to an origin even farther east. It is not the purpose of this study to engage in etymological speculations, which, anyhow, are probably irrelevant to our understanding of the cult.[2] Nor is there any point in becoming involved in the Thraco-Phrygian controversy: the earliest documents point to an origin of Sabazius in Asia Minor, and it is only from the first century B.C. that he is documented from the Balkans. If there is any basis for seeing him as part of a commonly inherited religion of Thracians and Phrygians, that lies entirely in the realm of undocumented speculation.[3]

The question is rather what kind of a god we have before us in the four passages of Aristophanes which mention him. He is associated with flutes in a passage of the *Horae*, a point to which we shall return when we discuss the attributes on the hands, and, as far as other gods are concerned, he is associated in the *Wasps* with the Korybantes, typical gods of madness, in the *Birds* with the mother of gods and men, and in the *Lysistrata* with Adonis. The passage in the *Lysistrata* is probably the most revealing as to Aristophanes' low opinion of the god. It must, however, be remembered that ridicule must, on the one hand, contain some element of truth in order to be effective, but cannot be relied on for accuracy. At all events, Sabazius appears as a favorite of women—with all the derogatory overtones which that has for an ancient audience—and is part of their τρυφή, perhaps best rendered as "loose living." Along with the beating of drums—another point to which we shall return when discussing the symbols on the hands—and the worship of Adonis on the rooftops—hardly the place for proper religion—there are πυκνοὶ

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[1] II, T. 1-4; in the footnotes which refer to the previous volumes of this set, references to the first volume will be indicated by I and the number of the item, references to the second volume will be indicated by II and the number of the item.

[2] Cf. John Chadwick, *The Mycenean World*, Cambridge, 1976, p. 86, "Any account of a god which begins from an explanation of his name ought to be treated with grave suspicion." The proposed etymologies, and their futility, are summarized by S. Johnson, *ANRW* II, 17, 3 (1984), p. 1586.

[3] See most recently V. Kontorini, *Rhodiaka* I, Louvain and Providence, 1983, p. 79.

Σαβάζιοι, "thick Sabaziuses." All kinds of Sabazius-shouts? Numerous representations of Sabazius?[4]

The first information on Sabazius from his Anatolian homeland is given to us by inscription II, 31, a reinscribed cult-decree from the reign of Artaxerxes II. This regulation, combined into one inscription with the dedication of a statue to Zeus Baradates (i.e., Ahura Mazda) by Droaphernes, son of Barakes, governor of Lydia, forbids the participation by functionaries of this officially sanctioned cult in the mysteries of Sabazius, Agdistis (= Cybele), or Ma (= Bellona) It is interesting to observe—a point to which I shall return later—that Apuleius, writing his *Metamorphoses* in the second century A.D., about the time that this inscription was reinscribed as a result of Antonine antiquarianism, lists the same deities—Mater Idaea (Cybele) and Bellona—in the same breath with Sabazius and the Syrian goddess.[5] One cannot help from wondering whether Apuleius, generally a faithful reflector of his own times, had some actual knowledge of this decree.[6]

What is most significant about this document, granted that one can take it as genuine, not an invention or antiquarian embellishment of the second century A.D., is that the cult of Sabazius, together with those of his Anatolian colleagues, is in disfavor and disrepute with the Persian authorities, who have introduced the cult of their Ahura Mazda under the guise of Zeus Baradates, or Lawgiver. (This fact would also militate against seeing Sabazius as Iranian on the basis of Aristophanes' *Wasps*.) Also noteworthy is the fact that there are mysteries of Sabazius, as of the other divinities mentioned. That is to say, the worship involved initiation into a select organization, probably with the imparting of some kind of special instruction.

As we proceed chronologically, we come to the famous passage in Demosthenes *De Corona*, given in *CCIS* II as TD. 1. This speech was delivered in 330 B.C., thirty-five years after the presumed date of the Sardis inscription. It is generally taken as a mainstay of our information on Sabazius, not only in most general works about Sabazius, but in every commentary on Demosthenes. But if one looks closely, one is amazed to find that the name of Sabazius is nowhere mentioned. Indeed, the only thing approaching it is the second element of the cry εὐοὶ σαβοί which is said to have been uttered as part of the disreputable religious activities in which Aeschines,

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[4] The scholiast of T, T. 40 is not of much help, except to show that he too felt the need of elucidation. Indeed, if one trusts Cicero, II, T. 8, Aristophanes elsewhere condemns and expels from the state Sabazius and certain other foreign gods. But that may be merely a projection into a more distant past of what Cicero knew to have happened in Rome in 139 B.C.

[5] II, T. 15—Apuleius is also the only other author to follow Aristophanes in mentioning Adonis along with Sabazius.

[6] The problematical ἔνπυρα of the inscription are probably censers for incense. For this and other peripheral problems, see the bibliography cited in *CCIS* II, *ad loc.*, and J. and L. Robert, *Bulletin Epigraphique*, 1979, no. 431.

Demosthenes' opponent, participated as a youth. In evaluating the passage, we should bear in mind what was said above about the credence which can be given to satire. In this case, Demosthenes is not concerned with giving us a document of religious history, but rather with constructing credible slander against Aeschines. Regrettably, this fact has not been borne in mind, either in antiquity or more recently. The first explicit connection between the word σαβοί and Sabazius is to be found in Strabo (II, T. 11), and the juxtaposition of this word with εὐοί, a known bacchic cry, leads to the close connection in the ancient scholarly mind between Sabazius and Dionysus, attested already before Strabo in the works of Cicero and Diodorus Siculus (II, T. 7 and 9). From this point on, the scholarly interpretation is repeated virtually unchecked for centuries. In Harpocration, who cites the Hellenistic authors Mnaseas and Amphitheos as originators of the tradition, the identity of Sabazius and Dionysus is taken for granted, and σαβοί has now given rise to Σαβοί as a name for Dionysus-worshippers. The same situation is to be found in Plutarch (II, TD. 2). Plutarch's πολλοί must be authors, not ordinary people, because nowhere in the epigraphical evidence is there any trace of anyone called a Σαβός. The relationship of Sabazius to Dionysus, likewise, although undoubtedly real, as we shall document from the monuments, is hardly as pronounced as these sources would have us believe, and never amounts to an identification. But the harm has been done. We read more or less the same thing in Macrobius, Hesychius, John Lydus, Photius, Souidas, the *Etymologicum Magnum*, the *Gudianum*, Eustathius, and the Aristophanes scholia.[7] In others, e.g. the *Orphic Hymn* to Hipta (II, T. 25), Σαβός appears as a shortened form of the divine name, rather than as the name of worshippers, but this too fails to find support in the epigraphy.

I shall return to this vexed topic later, both when I discuss the relationship of Sabazius with other divinities, and in a final chapter on the problem of the literary sources. For the moment, however, suffice it to reiterate that none of this is to be found in the text of Demosthenes. It is even uncertain whether εὐοὶ σαβοί is something that Aeschines ever shouted or is just a plain invention on Demosthenes' part. The only thing that can be said with some certainty is that a cry σαβοί would probably have evoked the name of Sabazius in the minds of Demosthenes' audience, and that it would not have appeared incongruous next to the Dionysiac cry εὐοί, or for that matter in proximity to another cry reminiscent of the name of Attis. As I have said, we are dealing, not with a document of religious history, but with believable slander.[8]

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[7] II, T. 26, 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, and 40.

[8] It should be noted that a fragment of Eupolis' *Baptai*, no. 84, known from a couple of late grammarians, is said to attribute a similar cry, εὐαί σαβαί, to the Thracian worship of the goddess Kottyto. See Edmonds, *The Fragments of Attic Comedy*, *ad. loc.*.

When we turn to the two references to Sabazius (II, T. 5 and 6) from Theophrastus' *Characters*, written around 300 B.C., the ground under our feet is still somewhat shaky, although they do provide some additional information to our stockpile. Perhaps most importantly we have in the description of the superstitious man's actions the first sure connection between Sabazius and the snake, an animal which is going to accompany him for the rest of his career, as we shall see amply in the chapter on symbols. The relationship, however, at least in the mind of Theophrastus' superstitious man, seems to be one of antipathy. For if he sees the παρείας snake, he calls on Sabazius to avert the omen.[9] Whereas, if he sees the kind of snake normally thought holy—it is not said to whom—he immediately sets up a hero-shrine. Possibly, of course, gods are thought here to avert the omens of their own animals. In this case, the παρείας would be considered holy to Sabazius, and the one called "holy" would be so to the hero the building of whose shrine it occasions. As to whether any of the snakes on the Sabazius-monuments are faithful representations of the παρείας, I am unable to say, but I would tend to doubt it. Color is of course absent on the monuments, and some of the snakes shown, e.g. that of II, 85, are crested or otherwise unrealistic.

If this is the limit of the information which can be squeezed from Theophastus' characterization of the superstitious man, even less can be gotten out of his late-learner, who is at pains to act younger than his years and might better be called the old fool. All we know is that when he is to be initiated into Sabazius-cult he is at pains to show off his appearance for the priest. This passage confirms what we already know from the Sardis inscription, namely that Sabazius-worship was a mystery religion into which initiation was necessary. We also find out here that, as might be expected, a priest was requisite. But these facts simply show the cult's similarity to those of Eleusis, Samothrace, etc., and do not establish it as in any way suspect, subversive, or the object of ridicule. Certainly the old man is being taken to task by Theophrastus for dolling himself up like someone much younger, but is it safe to conclude from this that mostly younger people were initiated into the Sabazius-religion? That might be stretching the evidence. What is most striking in both passages, however, is that Theophrastus, while criticizing his characters, seems, unlike Aristophanes or the Persians in Sardis, to direct no criticism at Sabazius himself. He is a god and his is a cult which exist alongside other gods and cults, and are taken as facts of everyday life in Athens of the time.

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[9] This snake is said to be a reddish-brown variety, sacred to Asclepius, a god whom we shall see to have other connections with Sabazius. See *LSJ*, *ad voc.* It is probably the species known to present-day herpetologists as Elaphe Longissima. The commentary by H. Bolkestein in *Theophrastos' Character der Deisidaimonia, RGVV* 21, 2, pp. 19-20, 58, helps little.

The next major document of Sabazius-cult is the inscription of Attalus III, dated to 135/4 B.C., recording the official establishment of his cult at Pergamum (II, 27). It has been remarkably little commented on, at least from the standpoint of religious history. Let me give a translation of the relevant portion:

"Since Queen Stratonice my mother, who has been most pious of all and especially affectionate to my father and myself, was reverently inclined towards all the gods and especially toward Zeus Sabazius, she introduced him into our country as a traditional deity of her ancestors. Because of his manifestations of divine power we decided to enshrine him in the temple of Athena Nikephoros as our comrade and helper in many deeds and many dangers. This sanctuary we thought would be a suitable place and worthy of him, and we gave orders accordingly about the sacrifices and processions and mysteries which are to be held for him on behalf of the city at proper times and places. We have also created for him a hereditary priest, my Athenaios, who exceeds in piety and excellence and in constant faith toward us."[10]

Stratonice, a Cappadocian princess, was betrothed to Eumenes II in 189/8 B.C., but it is uncertain whether the marriage took place immediately. After his death in 159, she married his brother, Attalus II.[11] She is recorded in this inscription as having brought Sabazius to Pergamum as a traditional divinity (πατροπαράδοτον). (Since the Cappadocian royalty was quasi-Iranian, this fact militates against the conclusions drawn from the Sardis-inscription, and for the accuracy of Aristophanes in the *Wasps*. This matter does not permit of reconciliation in the present state of our evidence.) Because of this fact, and the fact recorded in another part of the same inscription that the same Athenaios, here appointed priest of Sabazius, was also priest of Dionysus Kathegemon, patron divinity of the Attalids, von Prott concluded[12] that Zeus Sabazius was the patron god of the Cappadocian royalty. Unfortunately, there is absolutely no confirmation of this conjecture from other sources. Only one Sabazius-hand (I, 4) is from Cappadocia, and no epigraphical material.

Be that as it may, Stratonice's devotion to this god was inherited by her son. Sabazius is said to have appeared to and helped him in many unspecified dangerous situations. He is made co-inhabitant of the temple of Athena Nikephoros, one of the most important divinities of Pergamum,[13] housed in one of the most prominent structures of the Acropolis. This is where the inscription was actually found. Likewise sacrifices, processions, and mysteries (even this public cult cannot completely separate itself from the initiatory

[10] The translation is taken from Esther Hansen, *The Attalids of Pergamum*[2], Ithaca, 1971, p. 441, with modifications of spelling and changing "before the city" to "on behalf of the city." See L. Robert, *Fouilles d'Amyzon en Carie*, I, Paris, 1983, p. 175.

[11] Hansen, *op. cit.*, pp. 59 and 130.

[12] *AM* 37, 1902, p. 48.

[13] Hansen, *op. cit.*, pp. 447 f.

nature of the religion) are to be held in Zeus Sabazius' honor, and Athenaios, a cousin of Attalus', is appointed hereditary priest. But the most striking innovation of this inscription is the fact that here for the first recorded time, this previously scorned god is identified with Zeus himself, the ruler of the gods. This identification, of which more will be said later, will remain standard from this time on.[14]

As is well known, Attalus III did not long outlive the establishment of this cult, and gave his kingdom by will to the Romans. The likely conclusion is that the cult and Athenaios' hereditary priesthood did not long outlive their establisher. At all events, only one dedication to Sabazius, of uncertain date, exists from Pergamum (II, 26). But it must be remembered that our inscription commemorates only the culmination of a long process. Sabazius had actually been introduced to Pergamum fifty or so years before, and his acceptance and importance had been gradually growing. I think it can be shown that the prestige of Pergamum was also greatly influential in the propagation of Sabazius-cult elsewhere.

For in the years near the introduction of Sabazius to Pergamum, we find a proliferation of primarily epigraphical testimonia to the worship of Sabazius, sometimes as an official divinity, and sometimes identified with Zeus, both Pergamene innovations. Let us examine the testimonia individually. The earliest is apparently of the reign of Eumenes II, Stratonice's first husband (II, 30). That is what is concluded by the original editor, Sherman Johnson, on the basis of letter forms and the presence of a tribe Eumeneis at Sardis, the findspot of the inscription, although it is of course possible that the tribe outlived its eponym. In it, Menophilos, son of Menophilos, a member of that tribe and priest of [Zeus] Sabazius, apparently presents an altar in a temple to the deified tribe, Zeus, and a goddess whose name begins with S. The inscription poses problems of interpretation, such as the distinction which is apparently drawn between Zeus Sabazius and plain Zeus, but if it is indeed of the reign of Eumenes II, then it is the first evidence of the growing popularity of Sabazius-cult under Pergamene royal patronage, and Johnson's restoration of [Διός] is justified.

Probably also reflecting Pergamene influence is an honorific inscription of Tlos (II, 44a = *TAM* II, 582), dated by the editors around 100 B.C., and certainly after 187, when the Romans liberated the Lycian League from Rhodes. In it, an honorand whose name is lost is honored by the βουλή and δῆμος of

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[14] Hansen's treatment of the cult, *op. cit.*, p. 441, relying as it does on literary evidence and the outdated article of Eisele in Roscher's *Lexikon*, as well as the wild imaginings of A. B. Cook's *Zeus*, is hardly satisfactory. The source of her statement that Sabazius' cult originated at Sabatium, "a place twelve miles south of Dion," is unknown to me. None of the places called Dion in the *RE* seem particularly relevant.

Tlos for various benefactions. He had distinguished himself in wars (which ones during that turbulent period I do not venture to guess) and had helped preserve the ancestral laws and democracy of his city. Most importantly for us, he is described as priest for life of Σ[α]β[ά]ζος πρὸ πόλεως, i.e. on behalf of the city, the same phrase that occurs in the Pergamene inscription already discussed. Although the identification with Zeus is lacking, this inscription allows us to see that the official worship of Sabazius sanctioned at Pergamum since Stratonice's arrival had penetrated other parts of Asia Minor, not under Pergamene control. (Note that Tlos also, *TAM* II, 640, furnishes us with the only example I know of a theophoric name formed from that of Sabazius.)

From about the same time comes an inscription of Rhodes itself, the erstwhile oppressor of the Lycians. It too is honorific, the honorand being one Ariston of Syracuse. The difference is that the body granting the honors is not the state of Rhodes, but the κοινόν of the Σαβαζιασταί, one of those religious clubs, concerned *inter alia* with their members' funerals, which so proliferated on Rhodes in Hellenistic times (II, 46).[15] In this case Ariston, who had taken care of the graves, is to be honored for all time with a crown of young shoots, and the functionaries of the organization are to announce his honors annually after a certain ceremony, perhaps a banquet, which takes place annually in the ἀνδρών, i.e. the clubhouse of its all-male members. It is not certain whether this honor was granted after Ariston's own death, but the fact that the stone was found in a necropolis would tend to indicate that such was the case.[16] What is particularly interesting is that the Rhodian Sabazius-worshippers would take a native of far-off Syracuse into their organization, and that such a person would be attracted to the worship of this hitherto largely Anatolian divinity.

Nor do the organizations of Σαβαζιασταί stop in Rhodes. A brief epitaph of Teos on the Ionian coast (II, 28), probably of Hellenistic date, records that such an organization has taken care of the burial of a female member or member's relative, Euboula, wife or daughter of Menophilos, who was an immigrant from Athens. Teos had been under Pergamene control, but here the influence is more likely from Rhodes than directly from Pergamum.

If Euboula had returned home to Athens, however, she would not have found it difficult to seek out a similar organization of Σαβαζιασταί, or at least her husband wouldn't, as the members of the organization to be discussed are unquestionably all male. We possess a long list of the members of such a group from the Piraeus (II, 51 = *IG* II², 1325). The inscription is dated to 101-100 B.C., but records the membership of two years earlier. Of the fifty-

[15] See Kontorini's publication for fuller discussion of these organizations and references to earlier works.

[16] For other Sabazius-monuments found unquestionably in funerary contexts, see the figurine I, 43, the plaques II, 85, and the catacomb painting II, 65.

one members, thirty-four are identified as Athenian citizens by the presence of deme-names after their own names, two are described as Ἀντιοχεῖς (which Antioch is meant is unknown), three are Μιλήσιοι, two are Μακεδόνες, two are Λαοδικεῖς (again it is uncertain which Laodiceia), one is Ἀπαμεύς (same problem with Seleucid foundations), one is Ἡρακλεώτης (again the place is unclear), one Φλιεύς, one Μαρωνίτης, and one Αἰγινίτης. Three have no ethnics, and are possibly slaves, whereas one is specifically described as δημόσιος, or public slave. Again we have evidence of the catholic nature of these organizations, where Athenians rubbed elbows with metics, free men with slaves. Indeed, the chief priest of the organization is an Antiochene, the factotum (secretary, treasurer, and supervisor) is an Athenian. The worship of Sabazius is indeed becoming an international thing as it rings the Aegean.[17]

It was not only around the periphery of the Aegean, however, that Sabazius was making his presence felt in Hellenistic times. Two laconic dedications exist from the Cyclades, and are apparently of Hellenistic date. One, containing only the name of the god, is from Thera (II, 47), where as is well known a thriving city existed in Hellenistic times. The other, now lost, is from the island of Sikinos, remote and peaceful in antiquity as nowadays, but a possible stopping-point on the route from Thera to the Piraeus, if one takes a somewhat more westerly route than is normally followed (II, 49). Thus we see how our divinity traveled among the islands of the Aegean. Just recently added to the god's known itinerary, and taking him into the eastern Mediterranean, is Cyprus. Two lamps dedicated to Sabazius, of apparent Hellenistic date, have been discovered at Trachypedoula near Paphos, which was of course a thriving port throughout antiquity. They appear among the addenda at the end of this volume.

Also, a few years before the official establishment of the cult at Pergamum, although well after Stratonice's introduction of it, we find that Sabazius-worship has reached Rome itself. Our evidence this time, however, is not from inscriptions, but from the historian Valerius Maximus, who wrote over a century and a half later, in the reign of Tiberius. This type of evidence has two

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[17] Indeed there was the possibility that the cult of Sabazius in the Piraeus was of long standing, going back to the days when Demosthenes was reviling Aeschines. This at least is the opinion of Prof. Sterling Dow. It is based on the fact that there was allegedly found with the inscription discussed above, in clandestine excavations of the 1880's, a statue base (II, 52 = *IG* II², 2932) dated to 342/1 B.C. which records the names of several ἱεροποιοί (an office elsewhere unattested in Sabazius-cult) as dedicants. Dow also finds the stele with the list of names to be re-engraved and to have been originally used in the late fourth century B.C. If all this is true, then we have two documents both found on the site of a Sabazius-sanctuary which was in continuous existence for ca. 250 years. All of this, however, is, in my estimation, rather tenuous. In the absence of other evidence from the site, and considering the fact that these religious organizations are so typically Hellenistic a phenomenon, I prefer to consider it an unlikely hypothesis. The cutting on the stone II, 52, likewise is not congruent with the one known Sabazius-marble (II, 77), so it is not likely that a representation of Sabazius stood there.

defects: first, the historian is not a contemporary of the events he describes, but may have misunderstood his sources, and, second, we do not always have the text as he wrote it, so there may have been garbling in the manuscript tradition. At all events, the historian reports that in the year 139 B.C. people who tried to ruin Roman morals with the cult of Jupiter Sabazius were expelled from Rome by the *praetor peregrinus* (II, T. 12).[18] We seem then to have come full circle, from the original rejection of the cult by both Greek and Persian societies, to acceptance—heavily influenced by events at Pergamum—throughout the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean—to rejection again, as soon as Sabazius spreads into the western Mediterranean and the land of the ever xenophobic Romans. Nevertheless it should be noted that, unless Valerius Maximus is guilty of an anachronism, the identification of Sabazius and Zeus/Jupiter, a matter of official Pergamene piety, is present here as at Pergamum and probably at Sardis. It is also likely that those expelled from Rome were a group of Σαβαζιασταί, such as we have encountered at Teos, on Rhodes, and in the Piraeus.

We have so far seen how Sabazius-worship by ca. 100 B.C. seems to have established itself and spread. What happens next is a paradox, as the sources from the archaeological monuments are silent for nearly a century, and we have only literary sources, most of which are unspecific as to actual worship, and only one of which is of real historical value.

That is the reference in Alexander Polyhistor *apud* Macrobium (II, T. 26), a passage which we shall see later to be more trustworthy than most of the literary sources, to the existence of a Sabazius-temple in Thrace ca. 50 B.C. Sabazius has now started his progress from his Anatolian homeland by land as well, and Thrace is one of the first stopping-places. This impression is confirmed by the inscription II, 10, which records the restoration in 202 A.D. of a temple founded in the time of the Thracian kings, thus before 46 A.D. Likewise, the inscription II, 11, which may possibly be as early as the reign of Vespasian, speaks of a hereditary life-priesthood ἀπὸ προγόνων of Sabazius held by a man who is also high priest of the provincial κοινόν. The cult thus seems to have taken firm root in Thrace in the late first century B.C. and early first century A.D.

However, the earliest datable Sabazius-monuments which archaeology actually furnishes us after this century, almost, of silence, is the first of the bronze hands which come to characterize this cult. It is the one from the Roman supply camp at Dangstetten in Switzerland, which is known to have been in use from 15 to 9 B.C. (I, 49).[19] Some of the other simple hands may

[18] One manuscript has it that *Jews* who worshipped Jupiter Sabazius were expelled, and this has given rise to much modern misunderstanding. But see my article, *JRS* 69, 1979, p. 35 f. for the slim basis on which this speculation is built.

[19] See the original publication of the hand for the dating of this site.

also have a similarly early date, and we know from the discovery of several votive hands (I, 12-19) in the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum, that by the time of the destruction of those cities Sabazius-cult was well ensconced in Campania. But the epigraphical record is silent even longer. If one discounts the Thracian inscription II, 11, which may be of Vespasianic date but may also be considerably later, the first breaking of the epigraphic silence is the Bithynian inscription II, 22, of 99 A.D.

But this is all to get ahead of ourselves, and into the matter of the cult's distribution in the Roman Empire. Most of our monuments of the imperial period are undatable except in very general terms, but the year 100 A.D. already shows us a picture of distribution in which Sabazius not only continues to appear in his Anatolian homeland, but has strong footholds in Thrace and Campania, and has been recorded already for a hundred years as present among the soldiers of the Roman army, who played such an important role in the propagation of new religions.

CHAPTER TWO

OTHER DIVINITIES WITH WHOM SABAZIUS IS IDENTIFIED OR ASSOCIATED

A good deal may be told about a divinity when one looks at the other gods with whom his worshippers identified or associated him. We can thus gain some concept of the qualities which his worshippers saw in him. The only god with whom Sabazius is outright identified in the epigraphical material is Zeus/Jupiter, as we have already observed in the early testimonia from Pergamum, Sardis, and Rome.

In the period of the Roman Empire, the identification of Sabazius with Zeus or Jupiter, depending on which language one is writing, becomes the rule. It appears in inscriptions from Thrace, Moesia, Asia Minor, Delos, the Greek mainland, Dacia, Dalmatia, Italy, Africa, Gaul and Germany, as one can gather from a glance at the index to *CCIS* II. The identification is also implicit in the eagle which frequently surmounts Sabazius' outstretched index and middle fingers on the bronze hands, sitting on an object to be identified as a thunderbolt. *CCIS* I, 62 and 92 provide particularly good examples. Regrettably in the state of preservation of these objects, the eagle is often reduced to two clawed feet. Such hands whose origin is known come from Thrace, Italy, and Gaul. The eagle can also appear on the palm of the hand, as we see from I, 57, from Dacia, or on its back, as illustrated in I, 72. Eagles may also accompany Sabazius on marble reliefs (e.g. II, 45) and bronze plaques (e.g. II, 84), from Asia Minor and Italy. There thus can be no doubt but that Sabazius-worshippers considered their god to be a form of the supreme deity himself, and that this belief was shared throughout the empire. It is not by chance that the hand I, 32, was found in the Jupiter-sanctuary of Great St. Bernhard.

In a couple of cases, the Zeus-identification takes a special form. In one case, an inscription of Nicopolis ad Istrum, of uncertain date, Sabazius is called Ζεὺς Ἥλιος μέγας κύριος Σαβάζιος Ἀρσιληνός (II, 16), the last being a local epithet for him encountered also in inscriptions II, 10 and 17. Likewise, κύριος is attested for Sabazius in other Thracian inscriptions, and is of course known for other gods such as Men and Sarapis.[1] What is new and unparalleled is the assimilation of Sabazius to the sun-god, unknown in iconography or epigraphy elsewhere.[2]

[1] See, e.g., my *Corpus Monumentorum Religionis Dei Menis* II, Leiden 1975, p. 173, A6, and L. Vidman, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Religionis Isiacae et Sarapiacae*, Berlin, 1969, nos. 26, 172, and 306.

[2] This too may attest the influence of Sarapis. See Vidman, *op. cit.*, index, p. 343. The iden-

Other inscriptions, from the western provinces, identify Sabazius with the highest Jupiter of the Roman Empire, Jupiter Optimus Maximus (as Jupiter Dolichenus is also identified).[3] One of them (II, 57) is from Rome, and dated to 2 August 241 A.D. Together with II, 13, a dedication for the emperor's safety from Moesia Superior, of the same year, it is one of the two latest datable monuments of Sabazius-cult. It records the dedication to *I.O.M. Deus Sabadius* by a group of the Equites Singulares Augusti, the emperor's bodyguard. The votive altar was found in their camp in Rome. The dedicants are all from one *ala*, recruited in Moesia Inferior, an area in which Sabazius-worship is widespread. The other certain instance of the identification of Sabazius with this exalted god is likewise military in origin, an inscribed altar, now lost, from Mogontiacum (Mainz) in Germania Superior (II, 75). It is a dedication to *I.O.M. Sabasius Conservator*, the last being another typical title of the Roman Jupiter, perhaps best known from coin-legends, and to the honor of the eagle of the twenty-second legion, by a soldier who hailed from Emona (Ljubljana) in Dalmatia. Its date is the reign of Alexander Severus (222-235) and thus not long before the other inscriptions which we have just discussed. There seems thus to have been some upsurge in the popularity of the god in military circles not long before his relatively sudden demise, which will be discussed in greater detail when we come to the matter of Sabazius' association with Caelestis. In spite of the non-military context, it can probably also be assumed that *Iupiter Optimus Maximus Sabazius* provides the proper resolution of *I.O.M.S.* in an honorific inscription of unknown date from Suessula in Campania. In it a certain Lucius Pompeius Felicissimus, who had been *inter alia* priest and *dendrophorus* of the mother of the gods, is honored by the *Hortenses* who worship *I.O.M.S.* and call Lucius their *patronus* (II, 57).

Another identification with Zeus, which exists alongside an association, is provided by II, 42, an inscribed relief of Lydian Philadelphia (Alaşehir), again of uncertain date, showing a man making a libation into a crater behind which there is a tree. The dedicant, according to the inscription, has also dedicated (a statue of) Zeus Sabazius Neaulites, that is the Sabazius of Nea Aule, a place apparently unattested, to another Zeus, namely Koryphaios, the god of the

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tification of Sabazius with the sun-god may also be a result of the increased solar pantheism of the third century A.D., if the inscription can be dated that late. We will return to this point when we discuss Sabazius' association with Caelestis. The only other examples of the sun with Sabazius are decorative elements, in the corners or pediments of plaques, sometimes with a balancing moon, such as II, 79a, 80, 81, and 82. The inscription is also noteworthy in that, in spite of grammatical difficulties, it seems to associate Sabazius with the Great Idaean Mother, a phenomenon already mentioned in connection with the passage from Apuleius, II, T. 15. We will return later to a discussion of Sabazius' association with Cybele.

[3] See P. Merlat, *Répertoire des inscriptions et monuments figurés du culte de Jupiter Dolichenus*, Paris, 1951, index, pp. 397-8.

mountain peaks. We see here how Sabazius, when identified with Zeus, can acquire the local epithets which so often qualify the ruler of the gods (cf. *Arsilenos* in the Thracian inscription discussed above) and also be associated with another Zeus, this one not identified with Sabazius. The plaque from Aquae Calidae (Vichy), II, 74, of course shows complete iconographical assimilation to Jupiter, so much so that if it were not for the inscription, there would be no way of knowing that Sabazius is intended.

If one turns from Zeus/Jupiter, with whom Sabazius is identified, to other male divinities with whom he is merely associated, one finds his closest companion to be Hermes/Mercury. Busts or heads of this god occur on no fewer than twelve of the known hands, as one can ascertain from the index to *CCIS* I, and his caduceus, often winged, appears sometimes in addition to the god, as well as alone on another sixteen examples. There is reason to think that the Hermes-bust on an eagle's shoulder (I, Pl. 78) once belonged to a Sabazius-hand, as it provides the most reasonable restoration for the bust in a similar position on the St. Louis hand (I, 92). Of the anepigraphic plaques, II, 85 has both a bust of Hermes and a caduceus, and the god appears standing and holding the caduceus on II, 79a, 81, and 82, whereas the caduceus appears alone on II, 80 and II, D2—something which points to the correctness of its tentative identification as portraying Sabazius. Hermes/Mercury also plays a role of some kind in five of the inscribed monuments. In II, 43, a priest of Hermes is among the initiates to the cult of Zeus Sabazius at Ormeleis in the Cibyratis, dated 207/8, proving at least the compatibility of the cults. In II, 15, a Latin dedication of Nicopolis ad Istrum, date uncertain, Jupiter Sabazius and Mercury are co-recipients of a dedication, as is the case also in II, 18, from the same area (both inscriptions use the spelling *Sabadio*), whereas in II, 59, from Rome, we hear of a dedication to holy, undefeated Sabazius of an altar and (a statue of) Mercury. Finally, Mercury plays an important role as *nuntius* in the frescoes of the Praetextatus catacomb (II, 65), leading Vibia, the kinswoman or wife of Vincentius, a priest of Sabazius, to the underworld and into the presence of Dis Pater and Aera Cura, who judge her worthy of a materialistically happy afterlife. Perhaps one could venture to say that it is this eschatological aspect of Sabazius-cult, explicit only in these catacomb paintings, but probably present from the very beginning in the fact that the cult had initiations, which accounts for the prominence of Hermes/Mercury in his guise of Psychopompus as one of the chief accompanying divinities. Hermes does not lead just souls, however. In II, 41, an inscription recording the establishment of Sabazius-cult in the Κολοηνῶν κατοικία in the year 101 A.D., Hermes is shown leading Sabazius into the community.

Now the reader may be asking himself, "How about Dionysus? Aren't the literary sources full of allusions to the affinity between Sabazius and

Dionysus, even their identification? Don't most general articles on Sabazius emphasize his connection with Dionysus?"[4] Indeed, the connection is there, and as we go on we will have several occasions to refer to similarities between the cults, particularly in the matter of ritual. But the connections are of a general, unspecific nature. We have already seen how an attempt to elucidate a famous passage of Demosthenes has led to a scholarly overemphasis, and the fact that it is indeed an overemphasis is confirmed if one examines the actual monuments of the cult. Such an examination reveals that Dionysus is never identified with Sabazius, and certainly no more frequently associated than is Hermes. (That is, unless one uses the literary sources to make arbitrary and unjustified identifications of certain iconographic types as representing Sabazius. Then, of course, one can come up with just as much connection between Dionysus and Sabazius as one pleases.)[5]

Only one hand (I, 45) has an adjunct bust on it which is likely to represent Dionysus, and five have objects on them which can reasonably be called thyrsi. Of the anepigraphical plaques, the only one which unmistakably shows Dionysus is II, 85, from Spain. This remarkable object, along with its bust of Mercury and winged caduceus, also has a bust of Dionysus, apparently ivy-crowned, emerging from the top of a tree. Lower down, there are crossed thyrsi against the trunk of the tree, and from their ends hang bells and a drum, signs of Dionysiac, and perhaps also Sabazian revelry. This point, apparent already from the passages from Aristophanes cited at the beginning of Chapter One, will be discussed in greater detail later. But this monument is unique in its explicit representation of Dionysus, and, as it was found in a child's grave, one could reasonably expect the eschatological iconography, involving as it does three gods concerned with the afterlife, to be especially heavy. Turning from the iconographical to the epigraphical evidence, we must first remember that the same Athenaios, who was appointed priest of Sabazius by Attalus III, was also priest of Dionysus Kathegemon. The same list of initiates from Ormeleis (II, 43) that tells us that a priest of Hermes worshipped Sabazius, also tells us that a priest of Dionysus was initiated. In II, 73, an inscribed altar from Belalis Major, and our only evidence for Sabazius-worship in the province of Africa, we are informed that Jupiter Sabazius

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[4] Cf., e.g., R. Fellmann's article in *Die orientalischen Religionen im Römerreich*, Leiden, 1981, p. 316 ff., which, although in many ways excellent, never questions the accuracy of the literary sources.

[5] See my article in *Numen* 27, 1980, pp. 9-33, in which I abjure this procedure, an abjuration to which I adhere in *CCIS* II. The support which once seemed to a connection between Sabazius and Dionysus by the θία[σος] Σεβαζιανός of II, 6, also seems to be disappearing, as there are now doubts about the correctness of the restoration. We may be dealing with more proper names. This is the view represented by Tacheva-Hitova, among others. The interpretation of Σεβαζιανός as a theophoric name finds support in the existence of the name Σαβαζίων in the Lycian inscription *TAM* II, 640.

ordered it as a dedication to Liber Pater. This fact not only explains the Dionysiac symbolism of the piece, but shows that there was a degree of compatibility between the gods here too. In an inscription from Mylasa, listed among the addenda at the end of this volume, we hear that a priest of Dionysus and some gods whose name begins with an A, dedicated a statue to Dionysus and the people. Finally the relief of II, 64 shows Dionysus on one of its sides. To sum up then, the monumental evidence does not bear out the contention of the literary sources that Dionysus was identified with Sabazius, and shows him merely as one among several associated divinities, if anything less prominent than Hermes.

A god who shares Hermes' caduceus is Asclepius. He too, like Sabazius, has a particular affinity for snakes. (We will discuss Sabazius' liking for snakes when we turn to the symbols on the hands.) These common characteristics between Sabazius and Asclepius are confirmed by the fact that one inscribed hand (I, 5) was reputedly found in the Asclepieion on the south slope of the Athenian Acropolis, and the two dedications to Sabazius from Asclepius' great sanctuary at Epidaurus, both put up by men who had held the office of πυρφόρος in Asclepius-cult. One of these can be dated to 186 A.D. Thus Sabazius' compatibility with the great healing divinity, even extending to intrusion into two of his cult-centers, probably points to his function as a healing divinity also. It might even be suggested that the choice of a hand to represent him is due to the idea of the god's healing touch.

Other male divinities who keep company with Sabazius one way or another are Apollo, Mithras, Attis, the Dioscuri, Hercules, Mars, and Silvanus. As for Apollo, we find in II, 48 (of the reign of Antoninus Pius, provided the restoration is correct) that Musonius Rufus, a descendant of the illustrious Stoic of Nero's reign, life priest of Apollo on Delos, saw fit to honor Zeus Sabazius and another divinity whose name is not preserved, in keeping of a vow. Since the block is apparently an architrave, we may suppose the dedication of a small shrine of Zeus Sabazius and the other divinity on Apollo's sacred island. Apollo is also on one side of the eclectic relief II, 64. But, to anticipate, when we discuss Apollo again in the chapter on symbols, it will be largely a matter of noting differences.

Mithras appears in a small tauroctony on the chest of the bust-relief II, 64, and if the inscription *Nama Sabezio* on the tauroctony which I have listed as II, D1 has reference to Sabazius, then one can assume that honor was somehow accorded Sabazius somewhere in Mithras-cult. For the moment, at least, judgment must be suspended, as there is not enough evidence to go on. One Sabazius-dedication was found in a Mithraeum in Ostia (II, 66), with the result that this shrine is sometimes referred to as a Sabazeium. More will be said about this when we reach Sabazius' association with Caelestis.

Attis appears opposite Hermes, flanking Cybele on the two plaques II, 81

and 82, both of which have Sabazius on the side-plaques. I also think that Attis is the best identification for the small head with Phrygian cap which emerges from the top of a snake-entwined tree in the upper right of the plaque, II, 79a. Attis of course belongs to the circle of Cybele, which will be discussed in detail below.

The Dioscuri, who were considered gods of any kind of alternating phenomena,[6] also occur with Sabazius, either in their full form, or represented by their caps or by stars. Their only full-form appearances are on the end-plaques of II, 85, and in the upper corners of II, 80, in both cases accompanied by their horses. Likewise on II, 80, their caps clearly flank Sabazius' head. On two hands, also (I, 45 and 47), the symbols of the Dioscuri are present, caps on the latter, four-pointed stars flanking a lion's head (for Cybele) on the former.

Lastly, in II, 69, an inscription from near Praeneste, we find the dedication to be made *Deo magno Silvano Marti Herculi Iovi Sabazio*. It seems safe to say that Jupiter Sabazius is a full-fledged identification, but that the other gods are merely associated in this extremely eclectic assortment. (Who the gods are with whom Sabazius is associated in the Mylasa inscription cited in the addenda to this volume we cannot tell because of the fragmentary nature of the inscription.)

When we come to female divinities who are associated with Sabazius, primacy of position undoubtedly goes to Cybele, or, to put it more cautiously, to mother-goddesses who are iconographically indistinguishable from Cybele. For we are in the position of having, on the one hand, Cybele-representations without any identifying name, and, on the other, mother-goddesses mentioned by name without any accompanying illustration. We have already encountered this association of Sabazius on a couple of occasions, in regard to the Sardis inscription of the fourth century B.C., where the name used is Angdistis, and in regard to the Roman-period inscription of Nicopolis (II, 16), where the name used is [θεὰ] Ἰδεία.

Most spectacular, of course, of the monuments associating Sabazius with Cybele are the bronze plaques II, 81 and 82, apparently from the same mold. These have in the center of the main plaque a representation of Cybele (for so we will call her) seated on a throne flanked by lions, while another lion sits cat-like on her lap. She wears a turret-crown and in her right hand holds what is generally taken to be a poppy-head. (This is misunderstood on the drawing of II, 82.) We may have a reference to the importance of narcotic drugs in her cult. A couple of figures on the back of the throne hold a wreath over her head, and, as already mentioned, Attis, holding a flower, stands on her left and Hermes on her right. On the plaque to the viewer's left of the center

[6] Cf. especially F. Chapouthier, *Les Dioscures au service d'une déesse*, Paris, 1935.

stands Sabazius (II, frontispiece) holding a staff and a pine-cone in a field cluttered with attributes. Blinkenberg is probably right[7] when he concludes that the intended use of the plaques was as part of a priest's ceremonial gear. This is of particular interest, as it clearly shows that in the particular sanctuary or sanctuaries where these plaques originated, Sabazius was conceived of as a subordinate divinity to Cybele. (It should be noted in passing that the scene with the man plowing with lions on the stone plaque II, 78, may also be a reference to Cybele.)

The fact that the plaque which we have listed as II, D2 was found together with a similar plaque representing Cybele has been used, rightly I think, to support an attribution to Sabazius. And, as far as the hands are concerned, we have already seen one instance (I, 45) where the lion's head between the stars of the Dioscuri is to be taken as a symbol of Cybele. Likewise the bust of a "woman with mural crown" on the Avenches hand (I, 47) is very reminiscent of the head of Cybele on II, 81 and 82 and is probably to be taken as Cybele, although, as in the case of the Dionysus-bust of the same hand, already mentioned, Vermaseren is too cautious to do so. All in all, the combination of heads on this hand—Sabazius himself, Hermes, Dionysus, and Cybele—forms a coherent group and should cause no surprise. Another probable Cybele-head on a Sabazius-hand is provided by I, 27. This hand, previously thought lost, is in all probability to be identified with one in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. (See addenda at the end of this volume.) The bust on it, described in *CCIS* I as that of a man with a Phrygian cap, is revealed by the new photographs to be probably that of Cybele.

When we turn from the pictorial monuments to the texts, we find, as has already been observed, that Cybele nowhere appears by name. Yet this is not too surprising if one realizes the fact, well known to all students of religion in Roman Anatolia, that Cybele-iconography does service for a host of female divinities called by various local names, or, if one is of a syncretistic turn of mind, that Cybele masquerades behind a host of mother-goddesses. We have already had occasion to mention inscriptions of Sardis and Nicopolis ad Istrum which associate Sabazius with forms of the mother goddess. The Sardis inscription of Hellenistic date, II, 30, if read correctly, also couples him with a θεὰ Σ... The Italian inscription, II, 67, mentioned previously in connection with Sabazius' identification with Jupiter Optimus Maximus, honors a man who had been priest and *dendrophorus* of the Mater Deum. More revealing than these instances is the association of Sabazius with Meter Hipta in three Lydian inscriptions (II, 36, 37, and 40).[8] The discovery of the first of

[7] *Archäologische Studien*, Copenhagen, 1904, p. 109 f.

[8] For the possible reattribution to Mysia of the areas where these inscriptions were found, see P. Herrmann, *Anzeiger Wien* 122, 1985, p. 249.

these, II, 37, ca. 1880, brought confirmation of the real existence of a goddess known previously only from the *Orphic Hymns* (II, T. 24 and 25), according to which Sabazius is identified with Zeus in his capacity of father of Dionysus, whose nurse Hipta becomes. It is of course very dangerous to use these hymns as evidence of actual belief except perhaps in the service of some esoteric circle for which they were composed. But here we see that the author, although influenced by the literary confusion between Sabazius and Dionysus, at least identifies Sabazius with Zeus, something which is cultically correct, and has actual knowledge of a local mother-goddess cult in Lydia. Such contact with reality is rare among the authors.

The inscriptions themselves give us further information of Sabazius-Hipta cult. The first discovered (II, 37) has little text preserved, but the relief shows two little noisemakers, similar to those on one of the hands (I, 72). This will be discussed later. The two remaining both record instances of the gods visiting eye-trouble (a particularly common complaint) on those who had sinned against them. Thus they belong to the category of confessional steles, so characteristic of this part of the world. In both cases, the offender publishes his guilt and is presumably cured. In one discovered in 1914 (II, 40) the offense was the stealing of pigeons belonging to the gods, and in one known since 1961 (II, 36), the sin consisted in forcibly dragging off a male ἱερόδουλος of the gods. One is thus in a position to conclude that the sanctuary or sanctuaries where this pair was worshipped had holy pigeons and was staffed by slaves of the god, whose status, however, might be disputed, and held ceremonies in which shovel-like clappers could be used to make noise. All this should be borne in mind for later on, as we will be learning more about the cult-furniture and -personnel of this religion as we examine other documents.

While we need have no doubt but that Mother Hipta would have been illustrated in such a way that we would have called her Cybele on sight, it may be a little bit more surprising to think of Artemis Anaeitis in this way. It is clear, however, that "Cybele" is one of the possible ways of representing this divinity[9] and Artemis Anaeitis is also associated with Sabazius in one inscription of this area (II, 33). In this case, the offender, out of ignorance, cut trees from the sacred grove of Sabazius and Artemis Anaeitis. His punishment is unspecified, but he confesses. Thus we have seen that in the so-called Katakekaumene Sabazius had at least two shrines, was associated with at least two goddesses, either of whom might be represented as "Cybele," and had, in addition to noisemakers, sacred pigeons, temple slaves, and a holy grove. The matter of trees will also concern us later. But as far as associations with goddesses are concerned, we are still in the world of the bronze vestment-

[9] See I. Diakonoff, *BABesch* 54, 1979, p. 147, no. 15.

plaques of Rome, although Sabazius' role seems to be at least equal with that of the goddesses.

It would not be out of place to mention here a second literary source, already alluded to, which seems, like the *Orphic Hymns*, unusually well informed, I mean the passage from Apuleius (II, T. 15), and to bring it again into conjunction with the Sardis inscription of 365 B.C. (II, 31). In Apuleius, a priest of the Dea Syria calls upon a long string of divinities to blind a *praeco*, or public crier. The gods seem not to have been chosen at random. They are not only the Dea Syria herself, but Sabazius,[10] Bellona, the Mater Idaea, Venus, and Adonis. This is the only literary source which qualifies Sabazius with the adjective *sanctus*, and this already shows that Apuleius, as one might expect, was no mere cloistered scrivener, but had actual knowledge of the cult. For Sabazius has that adjective applied to him in no fewer than four inscriptions, all from Italy.[11] But the most striking thing about this passage is the triad of gods which immediately follows the Dea Syria herself. For Sabazius, Bellona = Ma, and the Mater Idaea = Cybele = Angdistis are precisely the gods mentioned in the Sardis inscription. Apparently this fourth-century B.C. inscription was re-inscribed in the second century A.D., or about the same time as Apuleius was writing his *Metamorphoses*. Can it be that Apuleius, who traveled widely, had some actual knowledge of the Sardis regulation? Or can it be that it was not just the re-inscription of a now totally useless regulation which was the product of Antonine antiquarianism, but the regulation itself, at least in part? In other words, are we dealing here with a historical fiction? In this case we have to assume that the antiquarian who did the work—unfortunately we do not know for what purpose, as the inscription was not found *in situ* but re-used—had some knowledge of actual fourth-century B.C. circumstances in Sardis, perhaps from a damaged inscription, but when it came to the triad of gods from whose mysteries the functionaries of Zeus Baradates were to abstain, used a triad which he knew to be attested in his own time, and which is found also in Apuleius. All this is speculative, but I do not think it can be ruled out. It would seriously undermine the value of the Sardis document as a historical source, but would account for the otherwise amazing coincidence of documents separated by about five hundred years.

Apart from Cybele and her relatives, there are not many other female divinities mentioned in connection with Sabazius. Artemis appears in relief on one side of the eclectic monument II, 64. An inscription from near Cibyra (II, 64) brings us a priest of Demeter and Sabazius (spelled Σαοάζος), and the

[10] Qualified by the adjective *sanctus* and with the spelling *Sabadius* in the MSS, perhaps not to be corrected, as it is attested also in the inscription II, 57.

[11] II, 57, 59, 60, and 61.

Tirana plaque (II, 79a) presents us with a standing female figure holding a torch. She may be intended for Demeter or Kore, as would befit a god with such pronounced eschatological functions. In the Vincentius catacomb the little-known Aera Cura (sometimes explained as Ἥρα κυρία) is shown together with Dis Pater, but this hardly constitutes an association with Sabazius. Finally, among minor connections with goddesses, it should be remembered that Sabazius shares a temple with a highly conventional goddess, Athena Nikephoros, at Pergamum. (The relationship of Sabazius with the goddess Fortuna will be discussed together with his association with Caelestis.)

More interesting than these marginal associations is that with (Caelestis) Triumphalis in a Roman inscription (II, 60), recording the dedication of an *aquae instrumentum*, probably a water conduit. The building where this inscription was found is a late-antique structure of the Forum Holitorium, which contains much re-used material apparently from structures on the adjacent Capitoline Hill. With it were found a number of other pieces which were treated in an article by M. Guarducci.[12] They include a dedication to Celestis Triumfalis (*sic*) with pairs of feet pointed in opposite directions, to symbolize *itus* and *reditus*, and a similar scratched drawing without inscription.[13] Both are accompanied by outlines of doves, Caelestis' sacred bird, and also one sacred to the joint cult of Sabazius and Mother Hipta, as we have seen. This evidence can be put together with the fact that two Sabazius-dedications (II, 58 and 59) were found in the same vicinity and that a statue-base[14] mentioning a priestess of the *dea virgo Caelestis praestantissimum numen montis Tarpei* was found in the same place, along with a statue of Fortuna very similar to II, 58, but without indication of what god it is dedicated to.[15] The conclusion thus seems inescapable that there was a joint sanctuary, or at least that there were adjoining sanctuaries of Sabazius and Caelestis on the Capitoline. Be it noted that Fortuna, whose statue is dedicated to Sabazius in II, 58, and apparently also in Guarducci's statuette, is co-recipient with Sabazius of a dedication from Fiano Romano (II, 70). The inscription II, 59, of this group, speaks of a statue of Mercury dedicated to Sabazius, as already discussed *à propos* of that deity, one of those most commonly associated with Sabazius. Our shrine thus appears somewhat eclectic in the divinities which it housed. Some of the pieces from it are burned, thus indicating destruction by fire. This fire took place some time after 259, the date of the latest datable inscription. This fact shows that Sabazius-cult survived, at least in Rome, for at least eighteen years after the latest preserved dedications to him, which are both of the

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[12] *Bulletino Communale* 72, 1946/8, p. 11 ff.
[13] Guarducci, *op. cit.*, figs. 1-3.
[14] Dessau, *ILS* 4438.
[15] Guarducci, *op. cit.*, p. 18, fig. 5.

year 241. It is also interesting to observe that in the so-called Sabazeium (Mithraeum) of Ostia, not only was a dedication to Sabazius found (II, 66), but also one to a *numen caeleste*, who may possibly be the goddess Caelestis.[16]

It is not to our purpose here to give the entire history of Tanit/Dea Caelestis at Rome,[17] but one very important event in her cult came with her theogamy with Sol Invictus in the time of Elagabalus, symbolized by the emperor's own third marriage, with Annia Faustina. Although Elagabalus' religious politics did not survive his assassination and *damnatio*, the cult of Dea Caelestis persisted. It is interesting to see her associated, on the Capitoline at that, with Sabazius in the period 230-260 A.D. We should recall that in II, 16, an inscription of Nicopolis ad Istrum, which it would be attractive to see as roughly contemporary in date, Sabazius has solar affinities, and in II, 59 Sabazius borrows the sun's and Mithras' epithet of *invictus*. Lastly, be it noted that Dea Caelestis herself has affinities with the Magna Mater, Sabazius' more usual female companion.[18]

It would seem appropriate to conclude this chapter on Sabazius' associations with other divinities with a general survey of the place played in his iconography by the sun, the moon, and the stars, which were of course considered by the ancients to be very powerful deities indeed. We have already mentioned the one instance (II, 16) in which Sabazius is outright identified with the sun-god, and the relationship which this inscription may have with his association with Caelestis. Elsewhere the appearance of the sun-god in Sabazius-iconography is more banal. In the pediments of some of the plaques he appears driving a quadriga. Along with Selene and two of their horses, he appears in the pediment of II, 79a, the two divinities flanking a votive hand. There are also moon- and sun-busts in the upper corners of the main field of II, 80. All this, I think, is pretty standard symbolism for the enduring nature of the god through time's alternations and changes. At the same time, a deeper significance is not necessarily to be ruled out. The sun and the moon regularly appear in the upper corners of Mithraic reliefs. In II, D1, for instance, we see the sun ascending in his chariot in the upper left, the moon descending in hers in the upper right. (By the way, on Sabazius-pieces, the positions of the sun and moon are always reversed.) At the same time, we

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[16] *CIL* XIV, 4318; see R. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*[2], p. 376. If this interpretation is correct, then the two were worshipped there also, although Mithras appears to have been the principal possessor of the sanctuary.

[17] Most recently treated by G. Halsberghe, *ANRW* II, 17, 4, 2182-2223.

[18] Cf. Guarducci, *op. cit.* Pl. I, in which Dea Caelestis is shown crossing the heavens on a lion, as well as Halsberghe, *op. cit., passim*. Since Dea Caelestis can be iconographically assimilated to Cybele, it would be attractive to see the Berlin plaques, treated here in relation to the latter, as having originated in the Capitoline sanctuary. That is not impossible, but neither is it supported by our evidence. For another association of Sabazius and the deified sun, see Macrobius, II, T. 26, to be discussed in more detail later.

know from other, less banal iconographical and epigraphical sources that the sun-god played an important role indeed in Mithraism. Something analogous may be the case in Sabazius-worship, but at least for the moment we do not have the evidence to say so.

Stars, as we have already noted, appear on several of the Sabazius-monuments, such as the hand I, 45, and the plaque II, 85. In the former case, four-pointed stars, in the latter, six-pointed ones symbolize the Dioscuri. On the plaque II, 81, a six-pointed star appears on the side-plaque with Sabazius, next to an object probably to be taken as a bunch of grapes. This may possibly symbolize the Dioscuri also, especially if there was a balancing star on the lost right side-plaque.

The moon, on the other hand, unquestionably plays an independent role of some kind in Sabazius-lore, although its details still elude us. Not only does she appear balancing the sun on plaques II, 79a and 80, but II, 85 has a large crescent in the upper left corner of the main plaque, without any balancing solar symbol. Likewise II, 41 shows a moon-crescent near the head of Hermes, who is leading Sabazius into the Κολοηνῶν κατοικία. In addition, the moon appears on a number of hands. Nos. I, 7, 62, and 68 include it among the regular attributes on the body of the hand, whereas nos. I, 10 and 86 accord it special prominence in that they have it supported on the thumb. Furthermore, there exist two statuettes, formerly attached to hands (I, 19 and 80) and one still attached to a hand (I, 15) which show the god with a prominent crescent on top of his head. I have already dealt extensively with these items[19] and suggested that we may have here evidence of a lunar syncretism present at least some of the time with Sabazius, which lends credence to the statement of Proclus (II, T. 27) as to the identification of Men and Sabazius among the Phrygians (and elsewhere as well, we may add, as I, 15 and 19 are known to have been found in Pompeii).

[19] *Muse* 8, 1974, pp. 34-37.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SYMBOLS OF SABAZIUS; THE PRACTICES OF THE CULT

If one went exclusively by the literary sources, the only animal which would be known to be associated with Sabazius is the snake. Yet even a cursory glance at the monuments is enough to convince the reader that there are four other important animals: the frog or toad, the lizard, the turtle, and the ram. Of these, three, like the snake, are reptiles. On the snake in ancient religion, of course, much has been written.[1] But the other animals' significance remains unexplained, so it might be well to see what the ancients thought of these creatures, generally, and rather uninformatively, lumped as "apotropaic" by scholars in their discussion of the hands, insofar as they are explained at all.

Aelian, for instance, reports of lizards that they have remarkable regenerative capacity, the parts living on separately after the animal is cut in two, and frequently joining up again to make a full lizard. Likewise he reports—from eyewitness!—that a lizard which had been captured and blinded was then kept inside an earthenware jar with air-holes for nine days, together with moist earth, a certain herb, and an iron ring with a lizard engraved on its stone. At the end of this time the lizard was released and had regained its sight.[2]

Certainly these highly exaggerated reports of the lizard's regenerative capacity give us some idea of the way that both educated and uneducated people in antiquity must have viewed this animal. Easily, then, we can envision the lizard being used as a symbol of renewed life in a cult which obviously must have laid great emphasis on eschatological matters, if we can judge by the Vincentius-catacomb paintings.

Aelian does not say anything of interest about turtles, but he has a good deal to say about frogs and toads. These animals, with their easily observed metamorphosis from egg to tadpole to adult, would also seem to be ideally suited as metaphors for a life which advances through stages of increasing perfection. (Later we shall speak of evidence for various grades of initiation in Sabazius-cult.) Yet toads, particularly, are viewed by Aelian with some repugnance, something which may warrant the "apotropaic" label given to them. For instance, quoting earlier authorities, he asserts that toads have two livers, one of them deadly, the other health-bringing. In another place we hear

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[1] See, e.g., Erich Küster, *Die Schlange in der griechischen Kunst und Religion*, RGVV 13, 2, 1913, who mentions Sabazius on pp. 177-179.

[2] *Historia Animalium* II, 23 and V, 47.

of a species of toad whose blood is highly poisonous, and which it is dangerous even to look at intently in the face. For the toad stares back and breathes on the viewer, causing a pallor which lasts for several days. And in yet another place we learn that the toad need only belch at the man who touches it to kill him![3]

As for frogs, Aelian seems most interested in showers of them. In one place we are informed that the author himself once encountered such a phenomenon near Naples, and in another that such a violent rain of frogs once occurred that the Antariates, a Mysian tribe, were forced to emigrate! In both cases, the frogs seem to have been only half-formed. If the accounts are to be taken at all seriously, we may imagine a tornado picking up the waters of a pond full of tadpoles and depositing them elsewhere.[4] At all events, given what the ancients seem to have been able to believe about the toad/frog, it seems to have been a beast both miraculous and formidable.

Apart from Aelian, there is evidence in funerary sculpture that the lizard could be viewed as a symbol of death and resurrection, since it is an animal which hibernates all winter.[5] As for the turtle, it perhaps is present on Sabazius-hands at least in part because of Sabazius' connection with Hermes, which we have already discussed. Hermes is of course quite closely associated with turtles, as is well known to all readers of the *Homeric Hymn*, and the connection carries over into art of the Roman period.[6] Otherwise turtles enjoyed a bad press, especially among the Christians,[7] perhaps in part because of their associations with Hermes and Sabazius. (As we shall see, there are many similarities between Christianity and Sabazius-worship, and the Christians may have particularly eschewed an animal which they associated with a cult which tried to copy them.)

Particularly by the Egyptians, frogs were associated well into Roman times with birth, something which again may go back to the fact that their metamorphosis is so well known to people in general. The Egyptian birth-goddess Heket is traditionally shown in frog-form or frog-headed, and this connection persists into a category of lamps of the third and early fourth centuries A.D. which show a frog on them. Together with other similar lamps with representations of Bes, of two embryos, etc., they seem to have been used to dispel evil spirits on occasions of childbirth. They also seem, with their connotation of rebirth, to have been appropriate for funerary contexts, or for the celebration of the new year, when many of the Egyptian gods were held to have been

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[3] *Historia Animalium* XVII, 12; XVII, 15; IX, 11.
[4] *Historia Animalium* II, 56 and XVII, 41.
[5] J.M.C. Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art*, London, 1973, pp. 220-1.
[6] Toynbee, *op. cit.*, p. 221.
[7] Toynbee, *op. cit.*, pp. 222-3.

born.[8] Although Sabazius is far from an Egyptian god—there is only one attestation of his cult from Egypt—it is not unlikely, given the mixture of ideas of different origin in late antiquity, that some of these concepts carried over to the representation of frogs in his cult also. Thus simply brushing the frogs aside as "apotropaic" is to understand only part of their significance.

Of mammals, the only one to occur frequently with Sabazius is the ram, its head frequently under the feet of the small figures of the god which were attached to the votive hands, similarly on the plaques, and as a symbol for the god on the handsome altar I, 61. The ram's head as resting-place for the god's feet would seem to play the same role as the bucranium in Men-cult.[9] The ram, like the bull, is of course a symbol of masculine vigor, associated with a variety of gods, of whom the most obvious is Zeus Ammon. Aelian reports that in India rams were set to fight each other as a sporting event, and that rams can frighten elephants.[10] (Wild boars can also frighten elephants,[11] a fact put to use by the Romans in fighting Pyrrhus of Epirus.) Rams are also known to have been used in Roman games.[12] It is also possible that the ram was Sabazius' sacrificial animal *par excellence*, such as the bull seems to have been with Men. In the closely connected Cybele-cult, as is well known, both the taurobolium and the criobolium were practiced. Perhaps the latter is to be associated with instances in which Sabazius also was worshipped, but specific evidence is lacking for such a conclusion.

The sheep is of course also important in Christian thought and art, and may thus, with the Latin blessing, and the idea of communion, to be discussed later, be seen as a point of contact with Sabazius-cult. It may be that things of this sort led Christians to view Sabazius-worship as a sort of copy-cat, and to reject so vehemently those elements which were not shared.

Incidentally, a likely interpretation for the bronze boar dedicated to Sabazius (II, 76) is that it is a substitute for a real sacrificial animal.[13] If so,

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[8] H. Wrede, *JfAC*, 11/12, 1968/9, p. 83 ff., with citation of earlier bibliography, especially R. Lullies in *Θεωρία*, *Festschrift Schuchardt*, Baden-Baden, 1960, for the same ideas in earlier Greek lore. This article enumerates examples of frogs primarily in classical Greek art, many of them found in graves, and concludes that among the Greeks also the frog, as well as being apotropaic because of its stare, was a symbol of rebirth because of its fertility. It thus shares with the pine-cone in Sabazius-cult the symbolism of regeneration. Lullies also stresses that the frog, along with the turtle, the snake and the lizard, shares the revulsion of the early Christian authors.

[9] There are, incidentally, a few bucrania attested also with Sabazius, but to my knowledge no ram's heads with Men. Only once do we have Men on a ram, in an Attic relief, *CMRDM* I, no. 2. It should also be observed that there are entire bulls with Men, but no entire rams with Sabazius.

[10] *Historia Animalium* XV, 15.

[11] Aelian I, 30 and Toynbee, *op. cit.* p. 131.

[12] Toynbee, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

[13] Cf. Lane, *CMRDM* I, no. 50.

further cold water is thrown on the idea of a syncretism of Sabazius-cult with Judaism, as such a sacrifice would be unthinkable to the Jews.[14]

The lion appears with Sabazius only insofar as he is associated with Cybele, and the dolphin, which seems to appear once (I, 61), can have either Dionysiac or Apolline associations. Finally a mouse appears once, seemingly chewing on a haunch of meat (II, 80). There exists a relief on which the Gaulish god Cernunnus is accompanied by a rat or mouse[15] and Apollo Smitheus in the Troad continues well into Roman times being associated with mice,[16] but such animals are rare as companions of divinities. Probably the scene, if it is to be explained at all, should be referred to lost Sabazius-mythology. This is an explanation of desperation to which we shall have recourse on other occasions.

Of the scenes involving humans, by far the commonest is that of a woman nursing a child, apparently in a cave. This scene appears on the inside of the wrist of at least seventeen hands, as well as under the roots of the right-hand tree on the Ampurias plaque, II, 85. The most obvious interpretation of this scene, and the one first given, is that hands with this adornment were dedications in thanksgiving for successful childbirth. This explanation, however, is probably incorrect.[17] Not only would it point to a disproportionate involvement of Sabazius in matters of parturition, making him into a kind of male Eileithyia—certainly a strange role—but the iconography also points in another direction. For in at least seven examples the mother-and-child scene is accompanied by a large bird, most likely to be identified as a crow or raven. (Otherwise, identifiable birds are restricted to doves/pigeons and Zeus' eagle, both already mentioned, and the heron-like bird of II, 64.) The unlikelihood of this bird's being present at so many actual births makes one rather think that we have here a representation of the mythological birth of Sabazius himself. If this is the case, then the emphasis on the god's birth would find parallelism in many other pagan cults, and, of course, in Christianity. As for the bird, one may adduce such parallels as the well-known story of Apollo and Coronis or the use of *corax* as the name for one of the grades of Mithraic initiation, but paradoxically perhaps most relevant is the belief, recorded by Pliny,[18] that the presence of a raven impedes parturition. Did Sabazius' mother, whoever she may be, give birth to him in spite of a raven sent by some malevolent spirit, much as Alcmena gave birth to Heracles in spite of Hera's opposition? In this case the reptiles (snakes) which also appear sometimes in

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[14] Less likely is the possibility that it is an *ex voto* for a successful hunt, as is the case, Toynbee, *op. cit.*, p. 133. For pig-sacrifices, see Toynbee, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

[15] Toynbee, *op. cit.*, p. 204, note 38, with further references.

[16] H. W. Parke, *The Oracles of Apollo in Asia Minor*, London, 1985, p. 176 ff.

[17] See Y. Hajjar, *Hommages à Maarten J. Vermaseren* I, Leiden, 1978, p. 455 ff.

[18] *Naturalis Historia* X, 32.

the mother-and-child scenes could represent helpful animals, whose powers counteracted that of the raven. (Or on the hypothesis that we are dealing with real deliveries, the raven could symbolize difficulties overcome with Sabazius' assistance, provided by his favorite animals.) Essentially I fear that the meaning of this scene will continue to elude us unless more explicit sources are found as to the lost mythology which must have surrounded this cult.[19]

The Ampurias plaque, II, 85, has a balancing scene under the left-hand tree, in which a woman is making an offering at an altar, apparently also in a cave, while reptiles, probably a lizard and two turtles, look on. Perhaps this scene is to be interpreted as portraying Sabazius' mother, after childbirth, giving thanks to helpful gods for having aided her in overcoming obstacles. The presence of the reptiles here too must be dictated by mythological considerations, now lost, except that they are obviously favorable in this kind of context. At all events, recovery of the mythology could conceivably show us a particular relevance of these animals which would account for their prominence better than the general considerations given above. This would be especially helpful in the case of the turtle.

Otherwise the scenes of offerings and libations on Sabazius-monuments all seem to concern human worshippers of the god. Processions are present in some instances, as we might have expected from the Pergamum inscription, and give us some idea as to the possible use of some of the hands, a subject to which we shall return. A good example is the Columbia hand, I, 65, which not only shows a procession of worshippers, but has a nail-hole showing that it itself could be carried on a pole in procession. One procession that needs particular comment is that on II, 41, the inscribed relief which commemorates Sabazius' introduction into the Κολοηνῶν κατοικία.[20] Not only is this document interesting in that it shows the introduction of Sabazius-cult at a fairly late date (101 A.D.) into a place not far from his presumed original homeland, but the iconography is itself not without interest. To the left of the top register of the relief, Sabazius himself is shown riding in a chariot, accompanied by the omnipresent snake, and by an eagle, which symbolizes his identification with Zeus. He is being led by Hermes, who is identifiable by his caduceus and cap. In the field by Hermes' head is the moon-crescent. All these are points which we have discussed in the last chapter. In the center of the top register there is a figure, probabaly another representation of Sabazius himself, standing on a podium and making a libation onto a flaming altar. To the right are three worshippers with hands raised in adoration. In the lower register, we see in the center another altar with offering-cakes on it, while seven worshippers

[19] The bird on I, 15, is definitely not an eagle, and the description of it should be corrected.

[20] On the use of the verb καθιερόω for the introduction of a cult, see particularly *OGIS* 383, 139-40, the Nemrud Dagh inscription of Antiochus I of Commagene. Καθοσιόω is used similarly. Συγκαθιερῶσαι appears in the Pergamene inscription of Attalus III.

face the altar on the left and six on the right. The inscription, as well as giving the date in the Sullan era, gives the name of the στεφανηφόρος[21] and the names of a large number of priests, seven at least partially preserved on the stele, including three occurrences of the name Apollonius![22]

The tree behind the altar is a common enough phenomenon in Sabazius-iconography, and will be discussed below. Suffice it to say here that a very similar scene is shown on II, 42, a stele of Philadelphia Lydiae, recording a dedication by a man who calls himself Μαίων, i.e. an inhabitant of Maeonia, in the same area as the inscription we have been discussing is from. But the presence of trees can lead to another human activity illustrated on and mentioned by Sabazius-monuments, namely tree-cutting. On the extreme right of the Ampurias plaque (II, 85) we see a little figure armed with an axe, as if about to take a whack at the right-hand tree, which is clearly a pine. What are we to make of him? On the one hand, the axe may be a symbol of divine power, as shown, e.g., by Men on the coins of Alia.[23] On the other hand we know that in the so-called Katakekaumene there was a grove sacred to Zeus Sabazius and Artemis Anaeitis, which we have already discussed. In this part of the world, Sabazius, as we have already had occasion to mention, enters into the number of the gods who are recipients of the so-called confessional steles, which give accounts of misfortunes which befall men as a result of offenses against the gods. The offenses must be expiated and the gods propitiated.[24] In one of these inscriptions, II, 33, a certain Aurelios Stratoneikos admits to having cut, out of ignorance, trees of these divinities out of their grove. He is punished in an unspecified way, makes a vow to the gods [to set up a stele if healed, is in fact healed], thanks them, and sets the stele up. This homely account may possibly shed light on the axe-carrying figure of the Ampurias plaque. For it is probably better to see the small figure, not as carrying a symbol of the god's power, but as an opponent of the god, ready to cut his sacred pine-tree. The possession of trees and groves may thus be seen as a widespread characteristic of Sabazius-cult, not restricted to the one sanctuary in Asia Minor.

The general matter of the god's functionaries and possessions will be considered later. But as long as we are dealing with monuments which show people on them, we might as well deal with those which show parts of people.

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[21] For this cult-title in the same area, see P. Herrmann, *Das Testament des Epikrates, usw., Sitzungsberichte Wien* 265, i, 1969, pp. 36-7, no. 2.

[22] I cannot find parallels for such a large number of priests elsewhere. The inscription published by P. Herrmann and E. Varınlıoğlu in their treatment of the θεοὶ Περευδηνοί, *Epigraphica Anatolica* 3, 1984, p. 15, no. 10, lists only three, and that seems a large number for a rural sanctuary.

[23] Lane, *CMRDM* II, Pl. XX, Alia 4-7.

[24] On this phenomenon in general, see most recently P. Herrmann, *Anzeiger Wien* 1985, p. 248 ff.

The first of these is also a confessional stele of the same area (II, 40), in which a certain Diokles, son of Trophimos, confesses to having stolen[25] pigeons or doves that belonged to Zeus Sabazius and Mother Hipta. He suffered eye-trouble, and the rest of his story unfolded as in the previous example. The stone is adorned with a pair of eyes in relief—the age-old fashion of votive representation of bodily parts—as well as with a couple of pigeons. We thus learn that pigeons could be sacred birds of Sabazius, probably kept for food or sacrifice, rather than bespeaking any connection between Sabazius and Aphrodite, although tame pigeons are known to have been kept as pets.[26] The connection of Sabazius with these birds, which we have already had occasion to mention in discussing his association with female divinities, would seem to be borne out by their probable representation on one of the cult-vessels from Pompeii, I, 15bis b.

As long as we are on the subject of parts of the human body shown on Sabazius-artifacts, we should mention the three phalli attached to the Amiens hand, I, 42. There are also phalli in relief on hands I, 31 and 45. Together with the scene of embracing satyr and maenad on vessel I, 15bis b, these representations might be taken as supporting the idea of Dionysiac sexual license in Sabazius-cult. But they are relatively isolated, and it is probably safer not to read too much into them, considering the extremely widespread use of phalli for apotropaic purposes.

Before we leave the subject of representations of humans on Sabazius-artifacts, two other items deserve mention. The Pompeii crater just mentioned has a representation of a boy about to start a foot-race. Do we interpret this as symbolic of the race which the Sabazius-worshipper has to run in life? This might not be inappropriate, in view of the interpretation given of some of Sabazius' favorite animals, and the changes they pass through. And what are we to make of the figure on the plaque from near Tomis, which seems to be that of a man plowing with a yoke of lions? The lion, as we have already seen, is the sacred animal of Cybele, but harnessing these animals to a plow is certainly intended as a *tour de force*, comparable to Jason's famous exploit. It is also worth mentioning that the scene is watched by a crow or raven, the same bird which we found in attendance in the cave-scene which I have speculated to represent Sabazius' birth. I would thus be inclined to see in this so far unique scene another episode of lost Sabazius-mythology, perhaps some exploit by Sabazius which accounts for his association with Cybele. Of course, the skeptic may wish to dismiss all this speculation by pointing out that the bird may simply be looking for worms in the freshly turned ground,

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[25] Ἔπειασα, an obvious early use of Modern Greek πιάνω, "take, catch." Cf. the Modern Greekism of τριάντα in II, 53.

[26] Toynbee, *op. cit.*, pp.258-9.

and thus devoid of any particular meaning. (Note also the presence of a plow among the attributes which clutter the plaque II, 80.)

We turn now to representations from the vegetable kingdom in Sabazius-iconography. As already indicated, trees are far from unknown on Sabazius-monuments. They grow behind or near altars or libation-vessels[27] or all by themselves.[28] But they are rarely identifiable. Two of them, however, are definitely pines—the right-hand one on II, 85 and that on I, 96—and more may be so intended, such as that on II, 64. This is of course the sacred tree of Cybele and Attis, under which Attis castrated himself, and presumably it was a pine which was carried by the *dendrophori* on the day called *arbor intrat* in the calendar of Philocalus.[29] Most importantly, perhaps, the pine is the source of the pine-cone which figures prominently in this and other cults.

Often there are not entire trees, but merely branches, one at least (I, 31) intended as a pine-branch, perhaps others also. Or there may be mere leaves, in some cases appearing to be ivy, palm, or vine.[30] Or the foliage may be made into wreaths, garlands (II, 61) or thyrsi (II, 73). This last is a Dionysiac connection, but on an altar, already discussed, which Sabazius ordered erected to Liber Pater.

The pine-cone stands out among all these things as Sabazius' attribute *par excellence* from the vegetable kingdom, being present now or originally on no fewer than fifty-nine of the monuments catalogued. The pine-cone is by no means exclusive to Sabazius, however. Other gods have it, notably Men.[31] It is generally, and rightly, viewed as a symbol of fertility and new life, and is a common ornament of Roman tombstones.[32] As such, it is consistent with the animal symbols of Sabazius.

Apart from these, other representations from the vegetable kingdom which appear with Sabazius are the flowers, apparently poppies, held by Attis on the central plaques of II, 81 and 82 (already discussed), grapes, probably present on hands I, 61 and 62 and with Sabazius on the side-plaques of II, 81 and 82, and clearly visible on the crater, I, 15bis a, as well as ears of grain, perhaps present on hands I, 29 and 61, and assuredly on the plaque, II, 80. From this grain may be made the loaves of bread present on a large number of monuments to be discussed below. Indeed, from the presence of grapes and grain, of bread and craters for wine (also to be discussed below), we are probably safe in seeing a sacramental meal of bread and wine in Sabazius-cult.

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[27] II, 25, 41, 42, 45, and 85.

[28] II, 78, 79, 79a, 80, 85, and 87, leaving out of consideration those on the hands.

[29] See M. J. Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis*, London, 1977, p. 113. We should remember that in II, 67, Sabazius-worshippers honor a man who is, among other things, a *dendrophorus*.

[30] See indices to vols. I and II.

[31] Cf. Lane, *CMRDM* III, pp. 104-5 and note 1.

[32] See F. Cumont, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire des Romains*, Paris, 1942, p. 219 ff.

When we turn to manufactured objects, we find that one of the most frequent, but also most banal, is the altar. It served as the focal point of every ancient cult, and that of Sabazius is no exception. So it should come as no surprise that the majority of the inscribed stones in *CCIS* II are altars (indeed II, 7, 11, and 30 specifically call themselves βωμός and II, 73 calls itself *ara*), but there are representations of altars on several of the hands and almost all of the plaques.

Let us turn to another common manufactured attribute, one more likely to be meaningful—the large vessel. I advisedly call it a "large vessel" in order to bring together the objects variously labeled both in their original publications and in *CCIS* I as amphora, cantharus, cista mystica, crater, hydria, etc., as well as just "vase." My contention is that these various labels are simply a result of the fragmentation with which the material has so far been studied. What emerges from an overview is that a large vessel, probably best labeled "crater," is present on nearly all the hands and plaques. It comes as a welcome confirmation of this fact that two such vessels (I, 15bis a and b) have actually been found in the unquestionably Sabazian context of a house in Pompeii where two hands also were found.[33] In addition to the large vessel, we not infrequently find also multiple small vessels, usually in groups of three. The workmanship on the hands is so bad that often these are indistinguishable from bees! A clear example, however, is given by the Ampurias plaque (II, 85), on which we see a large crater in front of the altar to the left, and three miniature craters between Sabazius' feet. Not only do these vessels remind one of the Dionysiac connection claimed for Sabazius, but their real importance is that they point to communal wine-drinking by Sabazius-worshippers. For that seems the most reasonable interpretation of these objects, which, be it repeated, stand out as one of the most commonly represented of all Sabazius-attributes. On this interpretation, the smaller vessels could have been used by the individual worshippers for their own portions of wine served from the communal bowl, or if not by the common worshippers, perhaps by the priests.

A while back, we spoke of the presence on Sabazius-monuments of grapes, and now we see what the wine made from those grapes was served in. At that time we mentioned that grain was also shown and anticipated the presence of the loaves of bread among the manufactured objects. Although not nearly so common as the crater, a loaf of bread, always round and usually scored, appears on eighteen of the hands[34] and on plaque II, 84, as well as promi-

[33] Although Vermaseren was cautious and listed only two such vessels in *CCIS* I, others had already been claimed, probably correctly, for our god. See R. Fellmann, *art. cit.*, chapter two, note 4, and *Studien zur Religion und Kultur Kleinasiens,* Leiden, 1978, p. 274 ff. For the body of this discusssion I will refer only to the Pompeii craters claimed by Vermaseren, but an appendix to this volume contains a brief discussion of some of the other vessels which, in my estimation, should also be claimed for Sabazius.

[34] See index to *CCIS* I.

nently on the crater I, 15bis a. I think thus that there can be little doubt but that the analogy with the Christian communion is thus to be completed, at least as far as the outward signs are concerned, whatever the worshippers may have seen in it—consumption of sacred bread accompanied the drinking of sacred wine.

If we, however, are used to taking communion in an atmosphere of reverence with the accompaniment of organ music or hymn-singing, the Sabazius-worshippers must have had quite a different auditory experience. For the next commonest group of artifacts shown in a Sabazius-context are musical instruments, or perhaps more properly called, noisemakers. Again, it is hard to recognize some of them, and, as in the case of the vessels, the unity of the situation has been obscured by the multiple nomenclature of the publications. The commonest are flute-like wind instruments, ranging from simple flutes, sometimes shown crossed, to multiple ones, syrinxes (generally *tibiae* in the literature), and ones curved at the end (generally *cornua* in the literature). Several of the monuments, e.g., one of the Pompeii craters, hand I, 15, and the side-plaque of II, 81, show several kinds of flute alongside each other—the Pompeii crater and the hand from the same house, a multiple flute and a single one with a curved end, and the Berlin plaque, a straight flute and one with a curved end. The prevalence of these instruments, of course, substantiates the connection between Sabazius and flute-playing, attested as far back as Aristophanes (II, T. 1). Next in popularity to flutes seem to be cymbals, which also occur on at least ten of the hands, one of the Pompeii craters, and probably on the plaque II, 79a. After them come other percussion instruments: bells on one hand and one plaque, drums or tambourines on two hands and one plaque, a triangle (not necessarily musical, however) on one hand. There is only one possible reference to non-instrumental music: the inscription from Argos , II, 55, the gravestone of a Sabazius-priest, lists a ῥαψωδός as a member of his family. The lyre, more reminiscent of Apollo, a god with whom Sabazius has little connection (only II, 48, from Delos) appears on only one genuine hand (I, 45)—also on the fakes listed under I, 44—alongside both a straight and a curved flute (reminiscent of the Berlin plaque) and the difficult-to-explain, but likewise Apolline arrow. Apollo, however, used to harmonious and placid music, must have found that of Sabazius-cult cacophonous and raucous—like that of a rock band beside that of Bach.

Of the remaining manufactured objects, most are fairly banal and meaningless, but a few may be singled out as possibly shedding light on the nature of the cult. One is the whip or purse. It is remarkable that it is frequently impossible to distinguish between these objects. The "whip" of I, 1 looks to me just like the "purse" of I, 15. If a whip is indeed what most of these items are, then we perhaps have evidence of the flagellation of initiates. One is

reminded of the flagellation scene in the Villa of the Mysteries, and again a point can be made for the similarity of Dionysiac and Sabazian rites. If, on the other hand, the proper interpretation of the objects is that they represent purses, then Sabazius-cult, like most religious institutions, was busy amassing money. Only would it have been so blatant as to have the purse among its prime symbols? For this reason I am inclined to favor the whip-interpretation. At all events, the object is quite frequent, being registered on at least nineteen hands and one of the plaques.

Another frequent symbol, occurring on twenty-seven hands and three plaques, is the pair of scales. Here it would seem that the obvious interpretation is that of weighing the worshipper's merits, or conversely his sins. Perhaps a large and obvious pair of scales was kept in every Sabazius-sanctuary and used at some point in the ritual.

Not common, but frequent enough to attract our attention, is the ladder. It occurs on one of the Pompeii hands (I, 14)[35] and on one of the ceremonial vessels found with it, as well as on the stone plaque from Romania, II, 78. The original editor of the Romanian plaque thinks that it symbolizes five stages of initiation, as his example has five rungs. There is lack of uniformity on this point, however, as the Pompeii crater shows only four rungs, and the hand two. Two rungs are also shown on the object tentatively and probably correctly identified as a ladder on the very similar hand from Herculaneum, I, 13. (Note that hands I, 13, and I, 14 have this object in the same relative position.) Although the initiatory nature of the cult cannot be doubted, we are not justified by the iconography in seeing any given number of stages of initiation, but merely a general symbol of aspiration for higher things on the worshipper's part.

Of the objects which occur only once, the spoon of I, 15 deserves special comment. This ladle-like spoon is portrayed vertically with its bowl pointing at the ceremonial vessel under it. I have elsewhere discussed spoons, a rarity in pagan cult, *à propos* of a silver spoon with dedication to Hecate.[36] I speculated at the time about the possible uses of spoons in pagan cult, and pointed out the early-Christian use of spoons to administer communion. (A particularly fine collection of communion spoons is to be found in the Byzantine Museum of Athens.) It is not impossible that Sabazius-cult, which shows so many other similarities to Christianity in its ritual practices, used the spoon similarly. Perhaps we are even justified in postulating a similar use of the spoon in other pagan cults, where communal meals are not otherwise attested,

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[35] The reference in the index of *CCIS I* to I, 15 is false and should be corrected.

[36] *Muse* 16, 1982, p. 50 ff. At the time, the only parallel I had was one with a dedication to Juno Sospita, in the British Museum, but since then the Thetford treasure has brought us a number of examples with dedication to Faunus with various Celtic epithets. See C. Johns and T. Potter, edd., *The Thetford Treasure*, London, 1983, pp. 46-8.

but it must be emphasized that this spoon in Sabazius-cult is an isolated instance. Our conclusions would be firmer if it were a standard feature, like the ceremonial vessel, the bread, or the scale.

If we turn from these more interesting items to the completely banal ones, we find that one of the commonest, apart from the altar, which has been discussed above, is the table, variously called monopode, dipode, shelf, pedestal, or console, which appears on numerous hands, in a more or less realistic manner, as support for offerings or for pine-cones. Probably of similar banality is the knife or dagger which appears on at least four of the hands and on one plaque. Although Sabazius-cult resembled Christianity in so many respects, it may also be assumed to have practiced animal sacrifice, like any other good pagan cult. We probably have here merely the instrument with which the victim was slaughtered.

Another quite common but banal symbol of Sabazius is the staff or scepter which he holds, particularly in the relief representations on the plaques.[37] The only thing especially noteworthy is that these staffs are often surmounted by small votive hands (and, in fact, the actual votive hands are often surprisingly small), as on II, 78 and 80, or, very clearly, on the staff between the sun and the moon in the pediment of plaque II, 79a. Sabazius' staff may also be snake-entwined, as that is his particular animal (II, 83, 84, and 87.)

Other attributes appear sporadically with Sabazius, without their meaning being especially clear. Hand I, 77 wears an elaborate bracelet with a representation of a stone in it, as well as a matching ring. The St. Louis hand, I, 92, seems to show a basket with twigs (I am not totally convinced of the identification), and (more convincingly) a bundle of twigs with a rope around it. Perhaps we may think of firewood for sacrifices. Hands I, 15 and perhaps I, 69 show a hook (*falx*), perhaps to be thought of in connection with the grape-harvest. Hands I, 72 and perhaps I, 3 show shovel-like objects, and a pair of similar instruments are on the stele II, 37. Perhaps they are to be thought of as noisemakers of some kind, and thus they take their place with the instruments discussed previously. Tongs with very curved and pointed ends are shown on hand I, 1. They are of unknown interpretation, whereas the torches of II 79 and 79a (if indeed our connection of II, 79 with Sabazius is correct) have an Eleusinian look, and may point to Sabazius' being a god of mysteries. Finally, the only food item apart from the wine and the bread and their raw materials, is the haunch of meat at which a mouse nibbles on plaque

[37] It is fruitless to try to distinguish, as some scholars do, between staffs and scepters, e.g., C. Naour, *Epigraphica Anatolica* 2, p. 114, notes 30-31. The Greek word σκῆπτρον, from which "scepter" is derived, originally means "staff," and staffs are of course attested as symbols of power at least as far back as Homer, *Iliad* I, in which Chryses appears carrying Apollo's fillets on a golden σκῆπτρον, or Achilles takes an oath by his σκῆπτρον. For what it is worth, the Loeb translation uses the word "staff" in both places.

II, 80. This remains one of the most puzzling representations anywhere in the body of our material, and it would be foolhardy to advance any interpretation of it. As already suggested, perhaps we should relegate it, together with the oft-repeated mother-and-child scene, to the realm of unknown Sabazius-mythology. That is probably also the place for the insects that occur from time to time with Sabazius, especially on the same II, 80.

We have now seen how a systematic study of the attributes on Sabazius-hands and other monuments can lead us out of the completely chaotic impression which they originally create to an understanding of what some of the practices and rituals of the cult must have been. In so doing, we have inevitably gotten sidetracked into the matter of what the cult-furniture was. We have already several times mentioned the Pompeii craters, out of which, probably with the aid of little craters or of ladles, wine was served to the communicants of Sabazius. Altars, of course, were everywhere, but it is uncertain what was done with the meat from the victims sacrificed on them, since it appears that the communal meal of the Sabazius-worshippers was of a different nature. Certainly, however, normal sacrifice was present in the public cult of Pergamum, and the occasional presence of knives points to its continuing. In this respect, Sabazius-cult may be thought of as transitional beween traditional and non-traditional pagan cults. As part of the ritual, the worshippers would listen to (and some of them probably also play) music primarily on wind and percussion instruments. Full-scale cult-images are rare (we have only II, 77 preserved), but the sanctuary may have contained a large symbolic pair of scales, tables supporting pine-cones and offering cakes, and we may imagine that it was adequately supplied with hands of the god. Some of these, like the examples of plaques II, 78 and 79a, may have been placed on the tops of poles, and perhaps carried in procession during part of the ritual. Processions, as we have pointed out, are mentioned in the Pergamene inscription and shown on the Columbia hand (I, 80). Furthermore, this use of the hands is borne out by the presence of nail-holes on fourteen of them. Yet other hands could be placed on altars or tables, as we see done with two of them, placed on short poles and then put on an altar, in plaque II, 85. Three of the hands are equipped with feet, so as better to stand on a flat surface. Those same three hands, especially I, 13 and 92 (I, 14 has the "dragon" protome to make it different) are so similar as to make us think that they are probably products of the same workshop. There must have been a considerable market for Sabazius-artifacts in antiquity. We possess a mold (II, 87) for the production of Sabazius-plaques, and plaques II, 81 and 82 are from the same mold. The exact use of all these plaques is unclear. Blinkenberg is undoubtedly right in seeing II, 81 and 82 as intended to adorn a priest's robe. But in this case they would have adorned the robes of a Cybele-priest, probably a castrated Gallus, and Sabazius' role is secondary in this cult and not yet satisfactorily

explained. II, 85, on the other hand, adorned a sarcophagus. Other plaques, like II, 83 and 84, show nail-holes in the corners, showing that they could have been attached to the woodwork of a sanctuary, or perhaps attached to standards, and, like some of the hands, carried in procession. Here, too, Sabazius may be thought of as an intermediate stage between a conventional god, depicted in a statue, and one, like Mithras, so involved with his attributes and his actions that he must be shown in relief. A very particular case, also, is shown by the Baltimore hand (I, 61), which, with its little door leading into a hollow interior, must have served as a sort of reliquary or repository for sacred objects. It must be remembered that in many cases the Sabazius-hands are so small (some are less than five centimenters in height) that is is hard to imagine their use except in household shrines.

In at least one case, we know that water was necessary for the cult, since in Rome we have record of an *aquae instrumentum* of some sort (II, 60). And we have seen that there must have been sacred doves or pigeons within the sanctuary. This was also the case, as we have seen, with the joint cult of Sabazius and Mother Hipta in Lydia. (Another striking connection between Asia Minor and Rome is provided by the wording of II, 63, with its emphasis on the *dunamis* of the god.) Perhaps the sacred birds flew around and nested in a sacred grove probably consisting of pine-trees. At all events, we know that there was a sacred grove at the joint sanctuary of Sabazius and Artemis Anaeitis, likewise in Lydia, and that the pine was of all trees the most closely connected with Sabazius. How much can be extrapolated from one sanctuary to another, of course, remains a matter of speculation.

As well as wearing plaques with representations of the divinity and his attributes, the priests may also have distinguished themselves from the average worshipper—this is highly speculative—by the wearing of ivory hairpins with Sabazius-hands on them. At all events, such hairpins exist, both from Sardinia (I, 34 and 35) and from Cyprus (see addenda at the end of this volume) .[38] As well as the priests, the cult, at least in Lydia, had at its disposal ἱερόδουλοι (II, 34 and 36) who may have taken care of the cult-furnishings and the physical plant of the sanctuaries. The priests themselves may have lived in sanctuary-owned housing. Otherwise it is difficult to interpret why a worshipper would have presented the god the οἶκος surrounded by a φιλὸς τόπος of which we read in II, 39.[39]

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[38] But other hairpins, which terminate in a pine-cone, and which G. Sotgiú, *Per la diffusione del culto di Sabazio*, Leiden, 1980, therefore wishes to connect with Sabazius, should be viewed with caution. Pine-cone hairpins exist from contexts, e.g., some in Luxembourg, in which there is no trace of Sabazius, according to the kind communication of my colleague Prof. Ralph Rowlett.

[39] For gods' houses in this area, see most recently P. Herrmann, *Anzeiger Wien* 1985, p. 255, no. 2. In this case, however, it would seem that the person residing in the god's house was not a priest, but did have to discharge certain duties towards the god. Perhaps the gods also realized money from real estate.

Lastly in our survey of cult-equipment, we should mention lamps. One of the hands (the lost I, 96) seems to show a lamp, but more importantly we have from Cyprus two actual lamps of Hellenistic date, which show inscriptions dedicating them to Sabazius, executed before the lamps were fired (see addenda).[40] The presence of these lamps indicates that Sabazius had need of them as part of his ritual, and thus that this ritual must have been carried out either at night—as some of the literary disparagers of the cult accuse it of being—or in the artificial darkness of a building.

So far, then, can we go on the basis of the artifacts in reconstructing what the cult-furnishings of a Sabazius-sanctuary must have been like, and what implications they have for ritual.

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[40] Although votive lamps dedicated to divinities seem to be an archaeological commonplace in the excavations of temples, examples with dedicatory inscriptions on them are rare. D.M. Bailey, *A Catalogue of Lamps in the British Museum* I, London, 1975, lists only two of them—one from the late sixth century B.C. (?) from Naucratis, dedicated to the Dioscuri, and another, from Cypriot Salamis, fifth century B.C. to Hellenistic, with a dedication to a god whose name is no longer preserved.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CULT IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE; WHO WORSHIPPED SABAZIUS AND WHY

In this chapter we will endeavor to examine our data in order to draw as complete a picture as they permit of the cult in the Roman imperial period. One point that will continue to concern us is the uniformity or non-uniformity of the cult among the various parts of the empire.

Let us turn our attention first to the name of the divinity, in which a non-uniformity is immediately evident. The standard forms, Σαβάζιος in Greek and *Sabazius* in Latin, prevail. But in Greek one also finds Σεβάζιος, Σαβάδιος, Σαουάζιος, Σαυάζιος, Σαάζιος, Σαοάζος, Σαβάζος, Σαβάζειος, Σεβάζειος, Ζαβάζιος, and Σαβάνδιος. In Latin one finds *Sabadius*, *Savadius*, *Sabasius*, *Sabazzius*, *Zabazius*, *Sabazus*, and *Sebadius*. Many of these, of course, can be attributed to an attempt to reproduce phonetically the pronunciation in the Greek or Latin of the period, or to the careless and uneducated spelling of the dedicants, corresponding to their careless and uneducated grammar, of which more will be said later. But a few of these variants deserve closer attention.

The first of these is the Greek variant with an epsilon in the first syllable—Σεβάζιος (Σεβάζειος). This occurs in nine inscriptions[1] all from Thrace or Moesia, except one from Argos in the Peloponnese. In addition, four of the inscriptions and five of the testimonia show a delta or d as the third consonant, something which also appears to be a Thraco-Moesian peculiarity.[2] The epigraphic instances of this variant are all Latin, and two of them (II, 15 and 18) have other points in common—they are dedications to Jupiter *Sabadius* and Mercury from the area of Nicopolis ad Istrum, and both use the formula *pro se et suis*. Among them also is the altar from the camp of the Equites Singulares in Rome, set up by the *ala prima* from the province of Moesia Inferior, i.e., the area of Nicopolis ad Istrum. Less obviously explicable, however, is the presence of this variant in II, 68, from Casinum. The testimonia which show this variant are also remarkable. One is the passage from Apuleius (II, T. 15), already several times mentioned, which seems to know some of the reality of the cult. The other is the passage from Macrobius, derived from Alexander Polyhistor (II, T. 26), which speaks of a temple of *Sebadius*, a god equated both with the sun and with Dionysus, on a Thracian hill called Zilmissus. Macrobius' spelling, it will be noted, combines the d as

[1] II, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10. 16, and 55; also in the questionable θίασος Σεβαζιανός of II, 6.
[2] II, 15, 18, 57, and 68; T. 15, 19, 22, 26, and 34.

third consonant with the e in the first syllable, something which we have already seen to be a Thraco-Moesian peculiarity. Although the Macrobius passage contains the identification with Dionysus which so plagues the literary sources, its trustworthiness should not be dismissed out of hand. For just as we have seen above that the only inscription which identifies Sabazius with the sun-god (II, 16) is from Nicopolis ad Istrum, i.e., not too far from Macrobius' temple, so his spelling displays both peculiarities which we have found to be characteristic of the Thraco-Moesian area. We can thus be certain of two things: a) that we are dealing with a genuine local variation of Sabazius' name (although why the d-spelling should occur only in Latin is unclear), and b) that the passage in Macrobius contains some genuine, if garbled information.[3]

If we turn our attention to the variants Σαουάζιος, Σαυάζιος, Σαοάζος, and Σαάζιος,[4] it is obvious that what they have in common is an attempt to render a w-glide between the first two vowels, whether by ου, ο, υ or nothing. This sound, of course, did not exist in either Greek or Latin of the imperial period. It is significant, and has often been commented on[5] that all the inscriptions with this variant are from Anatolia, Sabazius' original homeland, where it may be thought that our god retained more of the original form of his name, recalcitrant though it may have been to representation in the Greek alphabet.[6]

Finally, no pattern whatever can be derived from the three instances in which the first consonant is a zeta/z. The two Latin inscriptions with *Zabazius*, II, 69 and 73, are from Italy and North Africa, respectively, and the single Greek one is the hand from Athens, I, 5.

Let us next ask ourselves: Why did people pray to Sabazius? What qualities did they see in this god? A partial answer may be given by the epithets applied to him. For the dedicants of five inscriptions,[7] Sabazius was κύριος, that is to say, he was master of their lives. This adjective is not restricted to Sabazius, but is also applied to other gods, such as Men,[8] to say nothing of the Judaeo-Christian use of it. For the dedicants of another group of inscriptions,[9] which

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[3] The presence of a d as third consonant in the other testimonia (Origen, II, T. 19, Σαβάδιος; Arnobius, II, T. 22, Sebadios—the exact spelling as in Macrobius—; and the *Etymologicaum Gudianum*, II, T. 35, Σαβανδιός) is less easy to explain. Two of the sources are hostile, and it may be speculated that they had a common Thraco-Moesian source, even though they are not attacking Sabazius on the same groups, and Clement, who is close in content to Arnobius, uses the normal spelling. As for the *Gudianum*, who can account for the garbling of the spelling in a late source like that?

[4] II, 24, 25, 30, 32, 42, 43—which uses two of the variants—, and 44.

[5] E.g., by Fellmann, *art. cit.*, Chapter Two, note 4.

[6] One must remember, however, that Σαυάζιος and Σαβάζιος could also be pronounced the same at this time, but the use of the former alongside Σαουάζιος in II, 43 inclines me to group it here.

[7] II, 1, 5, 7, 12, and 16.

[8] See Chapter Two, note 1.

[9] II, 2, 4, 5, 7, and 17.

partially overlaps with the previous set, Sabazius was ἐπήκοος, that is, he heard prayers. This is an extremely widespread epithet for many gods, treated as far back as 1912 by Weinreich.[10] If these epithets are both obvious in meaning and of widespread application to other gods, why is their occurrence in this cult restricted to the Thraco-Moesian area? An answer is not easy, but apparently these two characteristics of Sabazius were of particular importance to the worshippers of this area, where, as we have seen, Sabazius-cult enjoyed particular prominence and where particular forms of his name were used.

In this area also, people were at pains to point out that Sabazius was an ancestral god, although all the early evidence points to his origin in Asia Minor, as stated at the beginning of this monograph. The earliest evidence for Sabazius in Thrace is that of Alexander Polyhistor (II, T. 26). But it takes only a few generations for a god to become ancestral, and in II, 11, we find Sabazius called προγονικός. This is a particularly important inscription for Sabazius-cult in this area, and it is unfortunate that it cannot be dated any more specifically than Flavian to Antonine. Not only is Sabazius addressed as προγονικός, but the dedicant, Titus Flavius Dinis, son of Skelos, of the tribe Quirina, is a high functionary who delights in his Roman citizenship. He is not only hereditary (ἀπὸ προγόνων) life priest of Sabazius, but also high priest of the κοινόν of the province. It would be interesting to know how long this priesthood had been in existence, and whether both priesthoods were normally held by the same person. This is one of the few pieces of evidence, apart from Pergamum, of Sabazius-cult acquiring a quasi-official status, instead of being the concern of private worshippers. It is significant, incidentally, that although like Men, Sabazius is of Anatolian origin, unlike him, he is never shown on the coins of the cities of Asia Minor, something which points to a largely unofficial status for the cult.

Also to be considered in this connection is inscription II, 10, from the same immediate area, recording the restoration of a temple said to have been built in the reign of one of the Thracian kings, i.e., before 46 A.D. Considering the tradition which existed in the Thraco-Moesian area of the deep-rootedness of Sabazius-cult, it should come as no surprise that the dedicant of II, 13 (the only dedication of Moesia Superior and one of the two latest overall) calls him *paternus*. More problematical is II, 2, also Thracian. In this inscription the dedicant calls Sabazius Μητρικός. It has been customary to print this text with a capital M, the idea presumably being that the epithet conveyed Sabazius' connection with the mother-goddess. But it seems to me that a more attractive explanation could simply be that the god was worshipped by the dedicant's mother or female ancestors. Although, in spite of what Aristophanes implies in the *Lysistrata*, recorded female votaries of Sabazius are scarce, a point to

[10] *AM* 37, 1912. pp. 1-68; see my *CMRDM* III, p. 78, for its application to Men.

which we shall return, Sabazius was certainly μητρικός to Attalus III, the cult's most important promoter.

If one turns from the Danubian area to Rome, one finds that in the Capitoline sanctuary Sabazius is qualified with the epithet *sanctus*, recorded in II, 58, 59, and 60. It also occurs in II, 71, from Viterbo, and in II, T. 15 (Apuleius), already mentioned as one of the most trustworthy of the testimonia. Once at the Capitoline sanctuary (II, 59), Sabazius bears the epithet *invictus* shared with Mithras and the Sun, as already mentioned in the discussion of the associations between Sabazius and other gods. Again, it seems obvious that a god should be holy, and it is unknown why this sanctuary should particularly emphasize the fact. But there are parallels, such as the worship of Ὅσιος καὶ Δίκαιος in Asia Minor. Once more we become aware of the existence of different local traditions within this cult.

Sabazius also in some cases bears local epithets, apparently derived from place-names, although in all cases the places are otherwise unattested. Although occurring also in the Latin west, this is a particularly widespread phenomenon among Anatolian gods, especially in cases where a Hellenic god has absorbed a local one, but also with major non-Hellenic gods. One need only think of the various local forms of Men, Apollo, Zeus, or the Mother. Sabazius, however, does not have nearly so many of these epithets as do some other gods. The only one which seems to be at all widespread is Ἀρσιληνός (Ἀρσεληνός), which occurs in II, 10, 16, and 17. One of these is the temple re-dedication from Augusta Traiana, mentioned above, and the other two are dedications of Nicopolis ad Istrum. This fact shows that the epithet, although originating in one place, had fair geographical distribution. Also in Thrace (II, 1) one finds the local epithet Ἀθυπαρηνός, but only in one inscription. Dalmatia also furnishes a local epithet, the only Latin one, *Iicus* in II, 56. If one turns to Asia Minor, one finds Παγισαρανός (or whatever the correct reading may be) in II, 23, from Bithynia, and Νεαυλίτης in II, 42, from Lydia. The latter is clearly from a Hellenic place-name, Νέα Αὐλή, rather than from a native name, as seems to be the case with all the others. That concludes the rather short list of local epithets which Sabazius bears.

We have drifted somewhat away from the subject of why people worshipped Sabazius, but we may return to it by an examination of the vocabulary of the dedications, which comprise the bulk of the inscriptions. We have already discussed the aberrant inscriptions of Lydia (II, 33, 36, and 40), which fall into the category of penitential inscriptions, in which someone attributes suffering to an offense against the gods, confesses, and erects a stele in thanksgiving for his cure. Although these inscriptions share some vocabulary with the more normal ones, they are in a distinct category to themselves. To recapitulate what has been said earlier, in II, 33, someone had cut down trees belonging to Zeus Sabazius and Artemis Anaeitis, was punished, and made

a thank-offering in repayment of a vow (εὐξάμενος εὐχαριστήριον). In II, 36, someone had a holy slave of Zeus Sabazius and Mother Hipta dragged off, probably disputing his status, was punished in the eyes, and set up the stele. In II, 40, someone caught holy doves of Zeus Sabazius and Mother Hipta, was punished in the eyes, and declared the gods' virtue. With these it would be appropriate to discuss also II, 34, in which a holy slave, presumably of Sabazius, at the god's request (ἐπιζητήσαντος Διὸς Σαβαζίου), because of his being punished, set up the stele. The grammar is unclear and the story completely lacking in this example, but the idea that the god could make a request of someone is a point to which we shall return.

The vocabulary of II, 33 is also typical of the more normal, less dramatic inscriptions from other areas. Forms of εὐξάμενος occur in II, 2 and 7 (Thrace), and on I, 76, as do the variants ἐξ εὐχῆς in II, 1 (Thrace), κατ' or κατὰ εὐχήν in II, 21 (Bithynia) and II, 48 (Delos), and simple εὐχήν in II, 25 (Moesia) and II, 66 (Italy). The Latin equivalent *votum* appears in II, 15 (Moesia) and II, 66 (Rome), and *ex voto* in II, 57 (Rome). In two cases we have the abbreviation *VSLM*, II, 56 (Dalmatia) and II, 61 (Rome). In all these cases the dedicants had made vows to Sabazius that if their prayers were fulfilled they would give offerings to him.

In other cases, Sabazius communicates directly with the worshipper, generally, we may suppose, by dream. Inscription II, 22 (Bithynia) was dedicated κατ' ὀνείρου ἐπιταγήν, II, 45 κατ' ὄνειρον, and II, 70 (Italy) *ex viso*. The same circumstances probably lie behind the simple κατ' ἐπιταγήν of II, 26 (Pergamum; the phrase is very common with Men), the *a deo iussus* of II, 20 (Dacia), the *ex imperio* of II, 66 (Italy), and the *ex iusso* of II, 73 (Africa). Perhaps the same idea inheres in the ἐπιζητήσαντος of II, 34, already mentioned. Only in one case is the priest an intermediary in communicating god's will to man—*per vocem sacerdotis* in II, 58 (Rome).

How about the personnel of the cult? If one examines the dedicants, one finds that there are a disproportionate number of priests among them, as opposed to common worshippers. Priests are also mentioned in a number of other documents. Priests are the dedicants of II, 1, 3, and 11 (Thrace), 30 (Lydia—the dedicant is a priest of Sabazius but the dedication may not be to him), and 48 (Delos; as the inscription is restored, a priest of Apollo makes a dedication to Sabazius). Similarly, in the Mylasa inscription listed at the end of this volume, a priest of Sabazius dedicated a statue of some kind to Dionysus and the δῆμος. Inscriptions II, 44 (Asia Minor) and 55 (Argos) are gravestones of Sabazius-priests. II, 41, recording the introduction of Sabazius-cult into Koloe, makes known the existence of a whole college of Sabazius-priests. Of course, to go back to pre-Roman times, II, 27 records the appointment of a public priest at Pergamum, and II, 44a honors a prominent citizen who was life priest of Sabazius at Tlos. From the Roman period, the only

similar situation that we have is described in II, 11, the Thracian inscription set up by the ἱερεὺς διὰ βίου καὶ ἀρχιερεὺς τοῦ κοινοῦ τῆς ἐπαρχείας. Such inscriptions point to public priesthoods, but in the Roman period, at least, these appear to have been the exception.[11]

An interesting situation is deducible from II, 43, from Ormeleis. In this dedication on behalf of a number of important people, we hear of two priests of Sabazius, as well as priests of Hermes and Dionysus, among the μύσται of Sabazius who set the inscription up. The priest presiding at the time of the dedication calls himself Kidramas δίς, and is listed along with his wife Elpis. Among the μύσται is listed his son Kidramas τρίς, likewise a priest of Sabazius, along with his wife Artemeis. Here we have an example of how being ἱερεὺς ἀπὸ προγόνων διὰ βίου actually worked, the younger Kidramas being priest even during his father's lifetime, but listed at the end of the μύσται, not as presiding priest. Interestingly also, both priests list their wives, although there are no other women listed among the μύσται. We can surmise that these women were priestesses of Sabazius, the only ones that we hear of.[12]

All these priests have so far been called ἱερεῖς, but if we turn to the Latin-speaking world, we find a divergence of terminology. The priest mentioned in II, 58, from the Capitoline sanctuary, is called *sacerdos* (his name is Pegasus, something which bespeaks Greek origin), as is the high functionary from Casinum mentioned in II, 68, the only inscription from the Latin west to make reference to the official standing of the cult. But in the Vincentius catacomb painting, II, 65, the Sabazius-priest whose wife's or kinswoman's happy afterlife is advertised, calls himself *antistes*. Whether this points to any distinction of function from a *sacerdos* is unclear, but it might be supposed that it does, and differentiates Vincentius from the *septem pii sacerdotes* who appear elsewhere in the inscription. Who they may have been we do not know. A suggestion may be made that they were historical Sabazius-priests who played an important part in the foundation and propagation of the cult, and were remembered with particular veneration by later generations of worshippers. Did Athenaios the Pergamene, for instance, leave any memory with his successors? On the other hand, they may be part of the lost Sabazius-mythology which has concerned us on other occasions.

Finally in our survey of priests should be mentioned the fact that both the dedicants of the Epidaurus inscriptions (II, 53 and 54) held the office of πυρφόρος in the cult of Asclepius. One of Sabazius' own ἱερόδουλοι of course is the dedicant of II, 34 (Lydia).

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[11] II, 6, if relevant at all to Sabazius-cult, also mentions a priest of a κοινόν but this is a smaller and private group.

[12] It would be clearer if the grammar were clearer. The presiding priest is in a genitive absolute, preceded by the singular ἱερατεύοντος, and his wife's name continues to be in the genitive. The plural ἱερατευόντων would have settled the matter.

Other inscriptions mention other cult-functionaries, but there is lack of uniformity in nomenclature. This bespeaks a lack of central organization of the cult. To go back to pre-Roman times again, II, 46 tells us that the Rhodian Σαβαζιασταί had monthly officials called ἐπιμήνιοι, as well as an offical called an ἐπιστάτης (overseer). The only other place that this title is recorded is the hand I, 28, from Liguria, where the dedicant calls himself ἐπιστατεύσας, i.e., an ex-overseer of the cult of Sabazius. This proves at least that the office was not for life, but the term was such a common one in so many contexts that only an abundance of attestation would justify the conclusion that it was a regular office in Sabazius-cult throughout the empire. Inscription II, 12, from Thrace, mentions four ἐπιμεληταί (caretakers), but it is uncertain whether these are normal cult-functionaries or simply people in charge of carrying out the terms of a bequest. The μύσται of Ormeleis have some interestingly named officials (II, 43), three πραγματευταί (agents) and three μισθωταί (renters), but it seems more likely that they were officials, not of the cult-group, but of the estate on which it existed.[13] That is all that we can conclude about cult-officials other than priests. It does not point to centrally imposed uniformity, nor, for that matter, to a hierarchical structure of the cult.

Insofar as they identify themselves by more than name, the next-largest group of Sabazius-dedicants are military men. Julianus, the dedicant of II, 4 (Thrace), is a retired member of the praetorian guard. Aurelius Mestrianos, the dedicant of II, 5 (Thrace), describes himself as a member of the *leg. II Parthica*. Inscription II, 57, of course, from Rome, is a dedication of a whole *ala* of the *equites singulares Augusti*, containing the names of fourteen dedicants. Inscription II, 71, from Viterbo, is unusually interesting. In it, Valerius Aulusanus, who describes himself as a soldier of the second cohort, makes a singularly ungrammatical dedication on behalf of the centurion Mercator. It would be interesting if photographs were available of the relief which accompanies the inscription. The horseman may be Sabazius himself, and the tree is consistent with Sabazius-iconography, but the boar is paralleled only by the bronze II, 76, and the dog not at all. It is probably safer to speculate that Mercator was injured during a boar-hunt in the forest and that this is the reason for the vow. The inscription from Mainz, II, 75, is dedicated to *I.O.M. Sabazius Conservator* and to the honor of the eagle of the *leg. XXII Alexandriana* by M. Aur. Germanus, whose home was in Emona (Ljubljana), and shows Sabazius' complete assimilation to the chief god of the Roman state. Finally, hand I,49, from Dangstetten, was found in an obviously military context, and it is likely that hands I, 47 and 48 (Avenches) and I, 50 (Köln) also had military dedicants, judging by the places they were found, as is the case also with some of the snake-vessels from the limes (see appendix), if they are to be connected with Sabazius. These documents show that Sabazius did indeed have his worshippers among the military, but hardly suffice to characterize him as primarily a soldiers' god, like Jupiter Dolichenus.

Other people with public functions who identify themselves in Sabazius-inscriptions include Aur. Astikos, a βοηθὸς κορνικουλαρίων, in II, 2 (Thrace)—the *cornicularii* were fiscal officials attached to Roman governors—; Flavius Asianus of II, 16 (Moesia), who calls himself βουλευτής, apparently a local councilman; and L. Aurel. Marcianus of the heavily restored II, 20 (Dacia), who calls himself *aedilicius*, and is probably also a local official.

Social standing is implied by the titles which the dedicants give themselves, but only once directly stated in these inscriptions. That occurs in II, 32, from Lydia, which Klados, freedman of Machatos, dedicates on behalf of his former master. One fact that definitely stands out in the epigraphical material is that the worshippers of Sabazius were overwhelmingly male. This is paradoxical, since it was a woman, Stratonice of Pergamum, who had the greatest impact of any single worshipper on the cult's history. Nonetheless, towards the beginning of the tradition, the Σαβαζιασταί of Rhodes worship their god in an ἀνδρών (II, 46) and those of the Piraeus are exclusively men. If Euboula of Teos is buried by such an organization (II, 28), it is probably because of her husband's associations. The only attested female dedicants of the Roman period are Attia Celerina of II, 58, Servilia of II, 63 (both from Rome), and Myrtine of II, 76. In the Vincentius catacomb, of course, Vibia goes to Sabazius-heaven, but again it is probably because of her husband's influence. We have already mentioned the priestesses of II, 43, and the possibility that the dedicant of II, 2 may have been honoring his mother's god, but otherwise men rule the cult.

Some conclusions may also be drawn about the social standing of the dedicants from the misspellings and barbarous grammar which abound in the inscriptions, and to which we have already alluded. In general, the quality of the Latin is even worse than that of the Greek. But, at least as far as the misspellings are concerned, it must be remembered that the period of the Roman empire was an age in which purely phonetic spelling had invaded even official inscriptions. It thus would probably have occasioned little surprise to see Zeus' name misspelled so prominently on the architrave of a votive chapel on Delos (II, 48), presented by a prominent Roman and priest of Apollo. But as particular blunders we may note, on the Greek side, the confusion of genitive and dative cases in the first two lines of II, 16 and the impressionistic grammar of II, 34, on the Latin side the *pro se et suos* of II, 15, the *ex votum* of II, 57, the *pro suam salutem* of II, 60, the rampant colloquialisms and misspellings of II, 65, and, as we have already observed, the hopeless grammar of II, 71. All this points to a none-too-high level of education among average Sabazius-worshippers.

Most people pray for their own benefit or that of their families. Thus we have the ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ of II, 17, the ὑπὲρ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σωτηρίας of II, 16, the ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν of II, 4, or in Latin, the *pro se et suis* of II, 15 and 18,

the *pro sua salute* of II, 60, and the *pro salute filiorum suorum* of II, 59. Only occasionally does some altruism or concern with wider horizons manifest itself, and that generally for the benefit of those who are in a position to help the dedicants. We have already seen a freedman pray for his former master (II, 32), and a soldier for his centurion (II, 71). The μύσται of II, 43, who live on an estate belonging to an imperial kinswoman, pray for the town of Ormeleis and the safety of their landowner, Annia Faustina, and her representative, Tiberius Claudius Kritoboulos. The town is coupled with Sabazius also in II, 24, and in the inscriptions from Mylasa (at the end of this volume), a Sabazius-priest dedicates a statue to Dionysus and the town. In II, 13, Flavius Clemens, perhaps to be added to our list of soldiers, sets up a dedication for the emperor's safety, a commonplace in other cults, such as that of Jupiter Dolichenus. The emperor at the time, however, was Gordian III, and three years later he met the violent end of most third-century emperors. The prayer was of no avail, and only a few years later the cult itself also dies out.

If there are priests and worshippers, then there must be temples. But it does not follow that everywhere that dedications have been found, temples existed. For dedications can easily be made to one divinity in the sanctuary of another, as is definitely the case with the Epidaurian inscriptions (II, 53 and 54) and probably the best explanation for the Ostia inscription (II, 66), or in totally secular places, as is the case of the dedication by the *equites singulares* (II, 57), except insofar as emperor-worship may be thought to have pervaded their camp. Even in Pergamum the official cult of Sabazius had to share a temple with Athena. And, although one might think that the hands, being cult-equipment, might more reliably mark the emplacement of sanctuaries, one must remember that I, 5 was found in the Athenian sanctuary of Asclepius, and I, 32 in a sanctuary of Jupiter, where the supreme divinity is not otherwise associated with Sabazius. Other hands, as we have observed, are so small that it is hard to see them except as equipment for household shrines. Where then do we have solid evidence for temples or other cult-places of Sabazius actually existing? The early associations of Σαβαζιασταί at Rhodes, Teos, and Piraeus would have had meeting-places. We have already seen how the Rhodian one was called ἀνδρών, and how, if Sterling Dow is right, the one in the Piraeus may have existed for several centuries. It is also probable that the Cypriot lamps are derived from such a sanctuary. If we are right in surmising that the second-century B.C. worshippers of Sabazius in Rome were the same kind of group, then their meeting-place would have been Rome's first Sabazius-temple. In Roman Thrace we can determine that there were Sabazius-temples at Serdica—II, 1 specifically tells us so—and at Augusta Traiana, where II, 10 tells us of the reconstruction of an older temple. If we are to take Macrobius (II, T. 26) seriously—and we have seen reason to do so—then there was a temple on the hill Zilmissus, wherever that may have been. It is

interesting to speculate what the ἔργον dedicated to Sabazius in II, 4 (near Serdica) may have been. Although no certainty can emerge, it would appear that something substantial was built for Sabazius here. The pairing of Sabazius and Mercury in two Moesian inscriptions (II, 15 and 18) suggests that, although the two were not found at exactly the same spot, a joint sanctuary of the two divinities may have existed somewhere in the area. If II, 48 is the architrave which it appears to be, then it graced the entrance to a Sabazius-chapel on Delos. In Egypt, we hear of a Sabazius-temple at Oxyrrhynchos, spacious enough to house a wedding banquet (II, 50). In Asia Minor, II, 30 bespeaks a temple of Sabazius at Sardis, perhaps already in Hellenistic times, and we know that the cult there went back into the fourth century B.C. Inscription II, 33 lets us know of the existence of a temple of Sabazius and Artemis Anaeitis at Sandal in Lydia, which possessed a grove and, if II, 34 is to be connected with it, also holy slaves. At Menye (Maeonia) in the same vicinity, Sabazius possessed real estate and is thus likely to have had a temple. Holy slaves definitely belonged to Sabazius and Mother Hipta at nearby Ayazviran, and the same pair of divinities had a temple with holy doves at nearby Kula/Koloe, unless II, 40 was brought from Ayazviran to the larger town of Kula in modern times. Moreover, the establishment of Sabazius in pomp at Koloe (II, 41) probably points to a temple of him by himself there. In Italy, II, 58-60 are among the documents which inform us of the presence of a third-century A.D. sanctuary of Sabazius and Caelestis on the slopes of the Capitoline, where some use of water was made and apparently there were also sacred doves. Probably, however, the greatest amount known about a Sabazius-sanctuary comes from another Italian source, the house in Pompeii[14] in which hands I, 14 and 15 were found, as well as the craters, I, 15bis, a and b. For it seems certain that we are dealing here with a small Sabazius-shrine in a private home, where perhaps cult would be rendered by a close-knit group of worshippers, probably still similar to those which we have seen in Hellenistic times. Early Christian groups, also, as is well known, met in private houses. The reader is referred to the drawing in volume I, page 8, for a plan of the building, with its brick altar in the middle of the courtyard, and behind it, if one looks from the entrance, an exedra with a podium—perhaps the place where the hands and other cult-objects were displayed—flanked by two rooms, perhaps for the storage of cultic paraphernalia. The craters, for their part, were found in the courtyard near the altar, and this is probably where they were used in the Sabazian communion. Likewise, if some of the other snake-vessels are to be connected with Sabazius, we need to study

[13] If the κοινόν of II, 6 is relevant to Sabazius-cult, then the group presents us not only with a priest but with a προστάτης or president.

[14] Reg. II, ins. I, 12.

carefully the contexts in which they were found, as we may here also be dealing with Sabazius-shrines. What is desirable, and has not yet happened, is the discovery of an unquestionable Sabazius-sanctuary under completely controlled archaeological circumstances, so that all its details could be properly recorded.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PROBLEM OF THE LITERARY SOURCES

The reader will have noticed that I have so far had little to say about most of the literary sources, which might by some people be considered the backbone of the evidence.[1] This is deliberate on my part. It is because I find them, with few exceptions, to be the least reliable category of evidence. It is for this reason that I have constructed a picture of the cult on the basis of the archaeological and epigraphical data first, with which I hope we can compare the literary testimonia and judge their accuracy.

Now whence this conviction of mine that the literary sources are unreliable? It starts from an observation of their obvious divergence from our other information, and finds confirmation in two likely human characteristics of the authors. The first is source-parroting. Just as the average student, when assigned a research paper, will automatically turn to the nearest encyclopaedia or standard reference work and copy what he thinks and hopes is accurate information, so the average trained scholar will rely on the works of his predecessors. And why not? After all, isn't that what these works exist for? Isn't knowledge supposed to be cumulative? Unfortunately, things are not always so simple. The words of the encyclopaedia or of one's scholarly predecessors always have to be taken critically, examined against the evidence which existed at the time for their conclusions and against that which has accumulated subsequently.[2] I submit that ancient scholars were guilty of the same kind of unquestioning use of sources as are modern scholars and students. Indeed, they were perhaps more reprehensible than their modern counterparts, in that they were writing, not about things long ago and far away, but about things which, at least through the mid-third century A.D.,

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[1] E.g., Robert Turcan relies largely on the evidence from Diodorus Siculus to advance his ideas concerning the iconography of Sabazius, something with which I have already taken issue, *Numen* 27, 1980, pp. 9-33.

[2] Lest anyone think that I am stating the obvious and admonishing against errors which every serious scholar knows enough to avoid, let me take just one instance in point: the Phrygian earth-goddess Semele. This is a construct of the nineteenth-century scholar Paul Kretschmer, on the basis of the Neo-Phrygian grave imprecations of Roman Asia Minor known to his time. It fits so well with versions of the Greek Dionysus-myth in which the god rescues his mother from the underworld and the general quest of modern mythographers to find an earth-mother under every stone, that it has had powerful attractiveness as an idea. Unfortunately for the theory, the discovery and publication of more Neo-Phrygian inscriptions (see *MAMA* 7, 1956, p. xxix) showed its complete untenability. Yet facts have not stood in the way of the propagation of so enticing an idea. In widely used mythology textbooks such as Reinhold's *Past and Present* or Morford and Lenardon's *Classical Mythology* one finds it retained, and through these books thousands of college undergraduates are being exposed to the misinformation.

they could have informed themselves about through a little first-hand observation. But it is much easier to sit in one's study and quote earlier authorities, particularly if they say things which one wants them to say.

This gets me to the second reason which I have for distrusting the literary sources: the matter of prejudice. In spite of its standing at Pergamum and other instances of quasi-official status catalogued above, the cult of Sabazius was not in good repute with the intelligentsia. It starts out by being put down by Aristophanes, whom everybody literate read, and not long thereafter is frowned on by the Persians at Sardis. And so on. It would seem to have had the same kind of reputation in antiquity that, say, the Scientologists, the Moonies, or the Hare Krishnas enjoy in the United States at the present day. Now if I, Professor of Classics that I am, should write anything in an offhand or general way about any of the aforementioned cults, I would be unlikely to research or document my statements very carefully, beyond going, say, to articles in recent issues of newsmagazines. I would not consider such groups worthy of careful documentation, and I certainly would not go out of my way to participate in any of their activities in order to gain a better insight into them. In my general revulsion at such groups, I might even be guilty of lumping them together with the Jonestown massacre and attributing quite unrelated evil deeds to them. So it was in antiquity also, whenever intellectually mainstream authors treated aberrant religions. The notoriously inaccurate statements of so intelligent an author as Tacitus, at the beginning of the fifth book of the *Histories*, about Judaism are well known, yet he could, without even stirring out of the library, have consulted the works of Philo or Josephus, perhaps even the Septuagint. What of cults, such as that of Sabazius, which didn't even have apologists?[3]

With these general considerations in mind, then, let us examine the literary sources more closely to see what of value can be extracted from them. We have already spoken some of the four passages from Aristophanes. In the passage from the *Horae*, two pieces of genuine information seem to be contained. One, that Sabazius is of Phrygian origin (the same as the point of the pun in the *Birds*). This would seem to be backed up by the earliness and frequency of the epigraphical testimonia from Anatolia, as well as the apparent preservation there of the original form of his name. The other piece of evidence from the *Horae* connects Sabazius with flutes. This is amply backed up by the presence of wind instruments on the hands and plaques, as discussed already. The rest of Aristophanes' statements find no confirmation in the remaining evidence. There is nothing much else in particular to connect

[3] I could continue in this vein almost indefinitely, if I brought in all the distorted images which pagans and Christians propagated of each other in the early years of our era. Christians kept it up too, even when the objects of their vehemence were long since dead horses. Any Christian polemic against Sabazius-cult which dates after ca. 260 A.D. is purely an academic exercise.

Sabazius with sleep—all gods communicated with their worshippers in dreams—, nothing to connect him with the Medes (this statement seems already to have puzzled the ancient commentators) as the *Wasps* would have us believe, nor are there independent references elsewhere[4] to plural Sabaziuses (again the scholiast is puzzled), or to any particular connection with Adonis, as the *Lysistrata* would have us believe. Aristophanes is, I submit, in part talking through his hat about the Scientologists of his own day. Indeed, if we are to believe Cicero (II, T. 8), Aristophanes would elsewhere have Sabazius ejected from the state.[5]

Aristophanes is an author who is so full of topical allusions and ephemeral jokes that it would not surprise me to find out that even in his lifetime the commentators were busy explaining to a new generation what was so funny in his plays of thirty years before. He cries out for elucidation, that, right or wrong, will satisfy the curious. The scholia which we have on him are of Byzantine date but consist of many layers of various ages, which, of course, cannot be sorted out from each other, as the scholiasts rarely name their sources. But let us look at the scholiastic tradition on Aristophanes, which I consider one of the main threads in the entire literary tradition, and see whether any of its statements agree with what we know about Sabazius from non-literary sources. First, the scholiast on the *Wasps* (II, T. 38), who, as I said before, does not know what to make of the mention of the Medes. He tells us that the Thracians call Dionysus Sabazius and that the priests are called Σαβοί. The evidence from epigraphy for either of these statements is nil. The only possible evidence for any connection of Sabazius with Dionysus in Thrace (discounting Macrobius as a literary source) is the questionably restored θίασος Σεβαζιανός in II, 6. Nor is there any trace of priests called Σαβοί. The Thracian inscriptions which mention priests all call them by the regular term ἱερεύς. So why does the scholiast make the statement which he does? First, someone who served him as source knew that at least from the mid-first century B.C., Thrace had been a major center of Sabazius-cult and wished to place the origin of his worship there. This fact could not have been deduced from Aristophanes, who calls him Phrygian. Our scholiast is the only literary source apart from Macrobius to mention Thrace. Second, there is the Demosthenes-exegetical tradition, which we shall soon return to, which is responsible both for the Dionysus-identification (derived from Demosthenes' εὐοί σαβοί), and for the invention of the Σαβοί, derived from the second part

[4] Except Photius, II, T. 31, and perhaps Origen, II,T. 19, both of them probably derivative from Aristophanes.

[5] By the way, the only evidence for the nocturnal goings-on in Sabazius-cult for which Cicero says that Aristophanes stigmatizes it are the lamps from Cyprus. We should remember that night-time cult-practices were always a particularly Roman bugbear, from the Bacchanalia of 187 B.C. to the time of the Christians.

of Demosthenes' cry, which looks like a masculine plural. The tradition which tries to explain Aristophanes soon gets mixed up with that which tries to explain Demosthenes, and this scholiastic statement is a typical upshot. At all events, there is no independent evidence whatever for what it claims.

The scholiast on the *Birds* (II, T. 39) is a little better. He gives three explanations, similar to each other (in the third of which he preserves the citation from the *Horae*), and is kind enough to attribute the first of the explanations to Amphitheos of Heracleia, a very shadowy writer of the Hellenistic period, known almost exclusively through his citations on this subject, specifically to his second book of local history. Why Amphitheos should mention Sabazius in his work is unknown—there is no record of his having been worshipped at Heracleia Pontica. Nor does Amphitheos name his own sources, but merely says that he had collected them from many places (συλλογιζόμενος πολλαχόθεν). I am willing to wager, however, that what Amphitheos had read was commentaries on Demosthenes. For he too, although leaving the Thracians out of the matter, brings in Dionysus, and uses derivatives from the term εὐοί. Only instead of turning the σαβοί into people, he comes up with the otherwise unattested terms σαβάζειν and σαβασμός for rites and practices in the Sabazius-cult. Of course, σαβασμός sounds very much like σεβασμός, "reverence," and Sabazius could also be called Sebazius. It is not the first nor the last time in scholarship, ancient or modern, that a chance resemblance of words will lead to an assumed etymology and a wrong explanation. The second explanation given in the *Birds*-scholiast is more like that of the scholiast on the *Wasps*, only it goes it one better. The σαβοί are not only people, not priests this time, but βάκχοι, but alternatively they can be holy places of the god. Of course, there is not one word of all these things either in the epigraphy.

Finally, the scholiast on the *Lysistrata* (II, T. 40), although he does not acknowledge it, is obviously following Amphitheos, as he has verbatim correspondences with the *Birds*-scholia, explanation one. At the end he adds, lamely, that many comic poets testify that Sabazius and Dionysus are the same god. No citations are given. If such poets ever existed, they are not to be found in Edmonds' standard edition of the fragments.

I have already made it clear that the scholiastic thread from Aristophanes soon became confused with that from Demosthenes in the literary tradition. Therefore, since Demosthenes is the next chronologically of the literary sources, let us turn our attention to him. The relevant passage is the one which I have given as II, T. D1, because, as I have pointed out, the name of Sabazius does not appear in it, and it is questionable whether it has anything at all to do with our god. In the famous speech *On the Crown*, Demosthenes is trying to vindicate his entire career, and conversely to vilify his long-term opponent Aeschines. In the course of so doing, he turns his attention to the religious

activities of the young Aeschines and his mother, who was evidently a priestess of some sort. In the daytime, Demosthenes informs us, Aeschines would lead θίασοι through the streets, with wreaths on their heads, squeezing παρείας snakes and lifting them over his head, shouting εὐοὶ σαβοί and dancing to the shout ὗης ἄττης ἄττης ὗης. (What Aeschines is accused of doing at night, I leave the reader to find out on his own.) Now I submit that if it were not for the word σαβοί no one would have taken this description or anything from the surrounding context as being anything but Dionysiac, except perhaps the reminiscence of Attis' name in the second cry. The only other things which might remind us of Sabazius are the snakes, specifically the παρεῖαι, which are the same ones mentioned by Theophrastus (II, T. 5) in connection with Sabazius. But snakes played a role in many ancient cults (cf. Artemidorus' list in II, T. 17), and we have already seen that these particular snakes are also sacred to Asclepius. So their mention, by itself, is not enough to establish a connection with Sabazius.

So we are back to the word σαβοί, which has caused all the trouble. There is of course no way of knowing whether it was a genuine cult-cry uttered by Aeschines or by anybody else at any time, or a free invention on Demosthenes' part, perhaps inspired by Sabazius' name, since he had some inkling of Sabazius' reputation as a disreputable god. At all events, the commentators seem soon to have come to the conclusion that the cry was connected with Sabazius. That much is made clear by Strabo (II, T. 11), who labels the cry εὐοὶ σαβοί as Σαβάζια and the cry ὗης ἄττης as Μητρῷα, clearly connecting the latter with Attis and thus with the great mother. Thereby Strabo also connects Sabazius with the great mother, as he does more directly in II, T. 10—a true enough fact, as we have seen from the iconography.

Once one connects the cry with Sabazius, the next step is to identify Sabazius with Dionysus, from the juxtaposition of their cries. This is done, as we have already seen and will see again, in a large number of the literary sources. But in actuality we have seen that the one god with whom Sabazius is identified in the non-literary sources is Zeus, and Dionysus is merely one of a number of gods with whom he is associated. When the erroneous identification has been made, however, the third step still remains: to explain the word σαβοί. We have already seen that there are at least two traditions in this regard: for Amphitheos, as reflected in the Aristophanes scholia (and, as we shall see, in Harpocration), it remains a cry, and gives rise to the words σαβασμός and σαβάζειν, probably under the influence of the similar-sounding derivatives of σέβομαι. For others, also as reflected in the Aristophanes scholia, σαβοί becomes a masculine plural noun, and refers, according to various sub-traditions, to priests, bacchic worshippers, or holy places. (In all this, I am disregarding the accentuation of these cries, which, as the reader can see by comparing the literary sources with each other, no one knew how really to accentuate anyhow.)

Let us now examine all the literary sources influenced by this tradition and see how they handle it and what other factors they introduce. For Cicero (II, T. 7) Sabazius is a form of Dionysus, specifically the third, fathered by a Cabirus, and king of Asia.[6]

Diodorus Siculus, in a passage which has occasioned much nonsense in the modern literature (II, T. 9),[7] quoting unnamed authorities, says that Sabazius was an early form of Dionysus, son of Zeus and Persephone, and goes ahead to tell of nighttime ceremonies, that old Roman bugbear (cf. Cicero, II, T. 8) and goes ahead to hint at scandalously licentious behavior indeed. Needless to say, there is none of this in the epigraphical or archaeological evidence, unless the Cypriot lamps be taken as evidence for nocturnal rites. We have in fact seen that the birth of Sabazius is probably an important thing in his iconography and mythology, but there is no reason to identify the female figure in the mother-and-child scene with Persephone, and the connections of Sabazius to the Eleusinian goddesses are few.

For Strabo (II, T. 10), Sabazius is Phrygian (so far, so good) and in some way the child of the great mother. Are there different ways of being your mother's child? At all events, we have seen that this ascription of motherhood is more likely than that to Persephone. Likewise for Strabo, Sabazius is not identified with Dionysus, but is a propagator of his rites. In other words, Strabo is not as far off the mark as Cicero and Diodorus. In all three of them, however, the connection or identification with Dionysus, probably originating from the explanations given of the Demosthenes-passage, has undergone further and different elaboration at the hands of unknown intermediary sources.

To go to later authors, the lexicographer Harpocration (II, T. 18), of Antonine times, is fairly explicit as to what variant versions of the tradition have come to him and by what routes. To begin with, he lets us know quite clearly that it all started with Demosthenes' speech. There are those, says Harpocration, who make σαβοί into Bacchic worshippers—this we have already encountered. Then Amphitheos is cited, among unnamed others, for the identification of Dionysus and Sabazius (although he does not take σαβοί as a masculine plural noun). Then back to the σαβοί as being bacchic worshippers, some people say. Then Mnaseas of Patara is brought in as an authority, only his story is that Sabazius is Dionysus' son.[8]

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[6] The Cabiri are originally local gods of Boeotia, with whom the ancient mythographers ended up identifying almost any other group of male divinities in sight, especially those of Samothrace, and the Korybantes, mentioned alongside Sabazius in the *Wasps*, and hence associated with him in some of the later sources. For all this, see most recently Susan Cole, *Theoi Megaloi, the Cult of the Great Gods at Samothrace*, Leiden, 1984, especially pp. 1-3.

[7] See my article in *Numen*, footnote 1, above.

[8] Mnaseas is a better attested Hellenistic author than Amphitheos, and the reader is referred to Laqueur's exhaustive article in *RE*. He is also responsible for some of the questionable information which we have concerning the great gods of Samothrace. See Cole, *loc. cit.*

Somewhat earlier than Harpocration we have the passage of Plutarch which I have given as II, T. D2. Plutarch does not mention Sabazius by name, but seems to be writing in the same tradition as the unidentified source who makes Σαβοί into Bacchic worshippers, although Plutarch also seems to think that the word is a cry. Plutarch further confuses matters by connecting the root *sab-* with the Sabbath. Thus he gets into the matter—a widespread misconception in antiquity—of the supposed Jewish worship of Dionysus, who presumably for Plutarch is to be identified with Sabazius. Confusion is almost total, but this passage, together with that from Valerius Maximus discussed in Chapter One and to be discussed again below (II, T. 12), has served as the basis for much modern speculation on a syncretism of Sabazius-cult with Judaism, something unlikely in itself, and not grounded in any clear evidence.

Now, during the lifetimes of all the authors so far discussed Sabazius-religion was actively practiced in the territory of the Roman Empire. We have commented on the fact that most Sabazius-worshippers were only marginally literate. This is a good thing. Had they read the works of Cicero or any of the others who discussed their religion, they would probably hardly have recognized it themselves!

The next place that the Demosthenes-based tradition comes to the fore is in the *Orphic Hymns* (II, T. 24 and 25), apparently composed in the fourth century A.D., after actual Sabazius-worship had ceased. The tradition, however, is much modified in the direction of reality. In these writings, Sabazius is the son of Kronos, i.e., identified with Zeus. So far, again, so good. But he is Zeus specifically in his role as Dionysus' father, the exact reverse of Mnaseas' version! Mother Hipta, whom we have seen to be a real cult-figure, becomes Dionysus' nurse, rejoicing in the rites of Σαβός. We see now that the Demosthenes-inspired word has become singularized and used as an alternate name of Sabazius himself, something else never attested in the epigraphy.

For Hesychius (II, T. 28), Sabazius is another name for Dionysus—this goes back to Amphitheos. But some people say that he is Dionysus' son—this must be Mnaseas. Sometimes he is called Σαβός—here there is agreement with the *Orphic Hymns*. Finally, and correctly, he is Phrygian, something which Hesychius must have known from Aristophanes. This is a fairly typical example of a late source and how it can be analyzed, but let us still pass them in review one by one.

John Lydus (II, T. 30) seems influenced by the Demosthenic tradition, specifically in the version which we have already seen in Diodorus Siculus. In a remarkably confused notice he says that Terpander the Lesbian (who probably lived long before Sabazius was ever heard of in Greek lands) says that Nyssa was the nurse of Dionysus, called by some Sabazius, son of Zeus and Persephone. Lydus combines this with the "Orphic" version of the Dionysus-myth, by having the Titans consume Dionysus-Sabazius.

Photius (II, T. 31) continues the lexicographic tradition with some new twists. The worshippers of Sabazius are called Σαβοί or Σαβαί (the only time the feminine form of this word is attested, but then if Sabazius is Dionysus, he must have female worshippers) or even Σαβάζιοι, bearing the same name as their god, as do Βάκχοι. This last we may imagine to go back to a reading of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, and is possibly present also in Origen (II, T. 19). Furthermore, he says that some people call Dionysus Σαβός, the same tradition that we first met with in the *Orphic Hymns*, where Σαβός is a short name for the god.

In Souidas, or, if you prefer, the *Suda* (II, T. 32), we have a double tradition represented. One is Amphitheos, although he is not named, who is quoted verbatim. The other is the unidentified source, already encountered, who takes the tradition that Σαβοί are Bacchic worshippers and makes them alternatively into holy places.

For Michael Psellus (II, T. 33), who is specifically trying to elucidate Demosthenes and pretends to a great deal of linguistic knowledge, the two cries of *On the Crown* together mean, "May you rain, O Zeus Sabazius, may you rain!" At least Psellus has gotten Sabazius identified with Zeus, which is right, but somehow Attis has become the Phrygian name for Zeus, which is surprising. Remarkably, Dionysus is not even mentioned. Psellus is clearly following an entirely different tradition from the normal scholiastic-lexicographical one, which relies mainly on Amphitheos and is traceable from Harpocration onward. One would like to know by what route this tradition came down to Michael Psellus in the eleventh century, and why it was not available to other writers.

Unfortunately, with the *Etymologicum Magnum* (II, T. 34), we are back to straight Amphitheos, although he is not acknowledged. Even alternate traditions, such as that which has the Σαβοί as worshippers or holy places, are ignored. But Sabazius is emphatically identifed with Dionysus. And the *Etymologicum Gudianum*, which has corrupted Sabazius' name into Σαβανδιός, is short and sweet: it is a name for Dionysus.

Eustathius, in his commentary on the *Odyssey* (II, T. 36), is somewhat obscure, but seems to be saying that ecstatic worshippers and their gods have the same names. This applies to Cybele, Sabazius, and Bacchus. We have seen this twist already in Photius. In his commentary on the *Iliad* (II, T. 37), he says that a dance, the σικιννίς, was danced by the Phrygians in honor of Sabazius Dionysus. He further quotes Arrian as saying that the dance was named after one of the nymphs in Cybele's train. It would be interesting to know just how much of this notice is derived from Arrian, who, in spite of his archaizing tendencies, presumably knew his way around Roman Asia Minor better than most, being Bithynian by birth and governor of Cappadocia. At all events, whereas the affinity with Cybele is correct, the jux-

taposition or identification of Dionysus with Sabazius in both passages seems to rely on the Amphitheos-tradition.

We have already discussed the Aristophanes-scholia. In short, then, twenty of our forty-one literary sources (counting Plutarch but not the Demosthenes passage itself) seem to rely to one extent or another on the tradition of Demosthenes-exegesis. At first (Cicero, Diodorus, Strabo) there is variety, but by the time we reach Harpocration the tradition seems to have settled down, and goes back to Amphitheos and the Σαβοί-equal-bacchic-worshippers source, with variants due to Mnaseas as to the relationship of Dionysus with Sabazius, the reverse tradition in the *Orphic Hymns*, and the unidentified Σαβοί-equal-priests and Σαβοί-equal-holy-places sources, which are frequently combined. The *Orphic Hymns* also introduce the variant that Σαβός is a short name for the god. Only John Lydus, who goes back in part to Diodorus, and Michael Psellus, whose source is unknown, represent significant divergences from the lexicographical-scholiastic canon, but are still within the same general Demosthenes-inspired tradition.

Some other sources also seem influenced, albeit in a minor way, by the Dionysus-identification which grows out of an attempt to explicate Demosthenes. We have already had occasion to discuss the passage from Macrobius (II, T. 25), which relies on Alexander Polyhistor. We observed that it seems to contain some genuine information, but that it too makes the Dionysus-identification. Interesting also is the treatment of Sabazius by the Neoplatonist philosophers, Iamblichus (II, T. 20 and 21), and Damascius (II, T. 29), although *prima facie* one would not expect them to say much of historical value, as the Neoplatonists seem to have had about the weakest grip on reality of anyone in the ancient world. In the first passage from his treatise *On the Mysteries*, Iamblichus lists those possessed by the Korybantes, by Sabazius, and by the Mother as three groups which become enthusiastic through the effect of music. So far, no influence of the Demosthenic tradition, but perhaps of the Aristophanic, as the Korybantes are mentioned. Traces of reality may also be found in the realization of the importance of music in the Sabazius-cult and his relation to the Mother. But by Iamblichus' time, all of these cults except that of the Mother would be been completely defunct, if indeed the Korybantes ever did have much of a cult, a question which does not concern us here. In the second passage from Iamblichus, the influence of Aristophanes is again present, as the force of the Korybantes is being contrasted with that of Sabazius. But the influence of the Demosthenic tradition is also present, as Sabazius' force is said to have been "prepared for bacchic revels and cleansing of souls and familiarity with old pollutions," whatever all that may mean and however it is best translated. As already observed, by Iamblichus' time neither Sabazius nor the Korybantes would have been worshipped, so his knowledge of these cults, if not merely an exer-

cise in antiquarianism, must have come through communication with those spirits with whom he felt so much at home.

Even later, and one of the last Neoplatonists, is Damascius, for whom Dionysus and Sabazius are similar, but not the same thing. Sabazius, we are informed, is a totality, a being which is already displaying its parts but is not yet divided, whereas Dionysus is an infinite multitude already divided. All of this, of course, has no relation at all to real Sabazius-cult, already dead for several centuries. But it is interesting to see how these old and misunderstood concepts, showing the influence of the Demosthenic tradition, could be used by the latest of the Neoplatonists for their own esoteric and arcane purposes.

Let us now turn our attention to authors completely uninfluenced by this tradition which started out as an attempt to explain a famous passage in Demosthenes and has led us so far afield. These sources are by and large more interesting and valuable, but several of them have already been discussed adequately, for instance, the various passages from Aristophanes, Theophrastus, and Apuleius. One which we have mentioned but not discussed at length is that from Valerius Maximus (II, T. 12).[9] In my opinion the passage is valuable in that it tells us of the expulsion of Sabazius-worshippers from Rome in 139 B.C. I believe it is a manuscript corruption which makes these Sabazius-worshippers into Jews. However, this passage, together with the one in Plutarch (II, T. D2), which, coming from an entirely different angle, tries to make Jews into Sabazius-worshippers (or may be viewed as so doing with sufficient reading between the lines, as neither Jews nor Sabazius are specifically mentioned) has caused a great deal of confusion in modern scholarship.

Let us move on to later sources. The reader might expect valuable information from Lucian (II, T. 13 and 14), normally an accurate, if caustic, observer of the religious phenomena of his own time. However, the two passages of Lucian in which Sabazius is mentioned are disappointing. In both he is merely one of a list of *parvenu* deities whom Lucian is making fun of. The fact that both times Sabazius appears with the Korybantes and with Attis would indicate that Lucian this time, instead of watching contemporary developments, has been reading his Aristophanes. The presence of Mithras in the first passage, however, introduces a god of whom Aristophanes had no knowledge and with whom Sabazius has some associations, but not close ones.

For Artemidorus (II, T. 17), Sabazius is one of a list of deities to whom the snake is sacred. Consequently, a dream of a snake may indicate any one of them. Artemidorus is in touch with reality in that he refers to Zeus Sabazius, one of the few literary sources to do so. The other deities in the list are Helios,

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[9] I have discussed it at length however in *JRS* 69, 1979, p. 35 ff. In *CCIS* II, I printed the text of Vat. Lat. 4929, which is that generally cited, although I think that it is corrupt.

Demeter and Kore, Hecate, Asclepius, and the Heroes. All of these gods except Hecate have been seen to have some relation, although tangential, with Sabazius. The mention of the Heroes with Sabazius in a context of snakes of course very strongly recalls the passage in Theophrastus' *Superstititous Man*, discussed in the first chapter.

Alone of the Neoplatonists, Proclus (II, T. 27) seems to have gotten hold of some genuine, if garbled, information, when he speaks of Men Sabazius being celebrated by the Phrygians in the midst of Sabazius' rites. This seems to be a recognition of Sabazius' occasional lunar attributes, such as are conspicuous on monuments such as I, 15, 19, and 80. Proclus, who like his colleagues Iamblichus and Damascius, lived after the cessation of Sabazius-cult, thus differs from them in that he uses a source which had some real knowledge of the religion.[10]

For Celsus, cited by Origen, Sabazius (in the form Sabadius, the Thraco-Moesian spelling) is an example of irrational belief. "He (Celsus) equates those who believe irrationally with begging priests of the mother, observers of omens, Mithrases and Sabaziuses, phantoms of Hecate or of another (female) spirit." The use of Sabazius' name in the plural is interesting, and may be compared with the passage of Photius (II, T. 31) discussed above. In this case, worshippers of Mithras too are thought to share the name of their god. But not much can be gained from a passage like this as to actual worship, any more than it can from the similar disparagement in Lucian.

I reserve last place in this discussion for another tradition about Sabazius, preserved in three Christian authors, Clement of Alexandria, Arnobius, and Firmicus Maternus (II, T. 16, 22, and 25). Clement and Arnobius preface their remarks by an account of the Dionysiac myth in the version which connects Dionysus with Persephone, i.e., the so-called "Orphic" version, which we have already encountered in Diodorus Siculus (II, T. 9). Although Sabazius is not actually mentioned in this context by either of them, there still exists the possibility that their source was influenced, at least indirectly, by the tradition which started out explaining Demosthenes. All three state that in the Sabazian mysteries a snake was drawn through the clothing of the initiates. Clement calls this a "god through the bosom," i.e., the snake was an embodiment of the god, and says that it was "proof of the purity of Zeus." Thus he seems to reflect some knowledge of Zeus' role in Sabazius-cult. In Arnobius, it is the rites which are called *Sebadia* (using the Thraco-Moesian form of the name), and it is specifically a gold snake which is passed through the initiates' clothing and taken out at the bottom. Arnobius seems to be hinting at sexual stimulation of the initiates by it. Firmicus' statement is much briefer, but clearly recognizes that Sabazius is to be identified with

[10] Cf. my article in *Muse* 8, 1974, p. 34 ff.

Zeus/Jupiter, something that he shares only with Valerius Maximus, Artemidorus, Clement, the *Orphic Hymns*, and Psellus, among the literary sources. In spite of differences among the three authors—two of them writing after the demise of Sabazius-religion—it seems obvious that their statements go back to a single source. That there were such rites in Sabazius-cult cannot be disproved, but it cannot be proved either, on the basis of statements in hostile sources. Suffice it to say that there are no references to it, nor representations of it, on monuments generated by the cult-members themselves. Unless, of course, it was something to be kept a deep, dark secret, one would expect such a central holy act as this is presented as being to be depicted, or at least mentioned, in the documentation which the cult itself has left us. Under no circumstances should theories be constructed which use this piece of evidence as the cornerstone of their argumentation.

Most of what I have written in this chapter, unlike the earlier chapters, is not a description of the Sabazius-cult. Rather it is an account of how a literary tradition can arise, flourish, and continue for centuries completely divorced from reality. I thought it necessary to analyse the tradition in order to dispel certain false notions of modern scholarship, and to ward against its possible continuation in the future. It is also to be hoped that scholars working in other areas of classical antiquity will take note of these conclusions and apply them to their own areas, thus forestalling the transplantation of ancient confusion and misinformation into the present. The really constructive part of this monograph, however, is to be found in the picture of Sabazius-cult which I have tried to draw in the first four chapters.

ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA TO *CCIS* I AND II

Addenda to volume I

A 1. Ivory hand (preserved height 0.095) of unknown provenience, except that it is from Cyprus. Nicosia, Cyprus Museum, no. Y 1 of the old collection.

Lane, *RDAC* 1986, p. 199 and Pl. XLII, 5-7.

The hand, probably intended as a hairpin, is held in the gesture of the *benedictio latina*. Unlike the Sardinian ivory hands (I, 34 and 35), it has a round object, probably intended for a pine-cone, balanced on thumb and forefinger.

A 2. A bronze statuette of Sabazius with his feet placed on a ram's head, apparently intended for attachment to the palm of a votive hand. Both hands were originally raised in blessing, but the right arm is now broken at the elbow. The piece is very similar to I, 87. It is in the Vatican Museums, but both inventory number and dimensions are unknown.

B. Lunn, *Latomus* 22, 1963, p. 256 and Pl. 40, fig. 30.

Addendum to **I, 27:** this hand has been for the last sixty-some years in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. It was published, without being recognized for what it was, by Cornelia Harcum in the *Bulletin of the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology*, July 1926, pp. 11-13. The new photographs which appear with this volume are supplied through the kindness of the Royal Ontario Museum.

Corrigenda to volume I

I, 80 should have been placed directly after I, 65, as both are in the same museum.

Addenda to volume II

A 3. The following monument was inadvertently omitted from the listing of inscriptions in *CCIS* II. The author apologizes for any inconvenience which this may have caused.

Mylasa: Milas, Turkey

A base of marble with moulding, first seen by A. Hauvette-Besnault and M. Dubois before 1881 in a street near the arsenal. Present whereabouts unknown.

Dimensions: height 0.845; length 1.06; width 0.60.

A. Hauvette-Besnault and M. Dubois, *BCH* 5, 1881, p. 106, no.

Inscription:

['Ο δεῖνα 'Αρίσ]τωνος τοῦ Φανίου ἱερεὺς Σαβαζίου καὶ τῶν 'Ασ[.....τ]
ὸ[ν ἀν]δριάντα Διονύσωι καὶ τῶι δήμωι.

Given the lack of illustration, it is hard to visualize the actual distribution of the preserved letters.

AD 1. I remain rather skeptical of the following inscription:

Yaikin, 12 kilometers southwest of Aphrodisias, Turkey

Stele of white marble first seen before 1890 in a private stable by G. Doublet and G. Deschamps. Reviewed and reread by W. R. Paton. Present whereabouts unknown.

G. Doublet and G. Deschamps, *BCH* 14, 1890, p. 610, no. 5; W. R. Paton, *JHS* 20, 1900, p. 75, no. 5; Schaeffer, *RE* II, 1, 1, col. 1544.

Inscription (Paton's reading):

Κατὰ προ
φητείαν
θεοῦ Σαυ
[αζίο]υ

Paton's reading is vastly different from that of the French scholars, the name of Sabazius is heavily restored, and there is no other use of the word προφητεία in the material concerning our god. As a result, I feel that judgment should be withheld pending a re-examination of the stone, something admittedly unlikely ever to be possible.

A 4. Clay lamp, discovered in 1969 near the village of Trachypedoula in the district of Paphos, Cyprus. Paphos museum no. 2004/25.

Dimensions: length 0.132, height 0.053; diameter 0.091.

V. Karageorghis, *BCH* 94, 1970, p. 216 and 218, fig. 53; Lane, *RDAC* 1986, p. 200, and Pl. XLIII, nos. 1-2.

The lamp, which is of apparent Hellenistic date, is preserved entire except for its handle, and is provided with a lid. It bears the inscription Σαβαζίου, inscribed before firing.

A 5. Clay lamp, discovered together with no. A 3. Paphos museum no. 2004/26.

Dimensions: length 0.116; diameter 0.083.

V. Karageorghis, *BCH* 94, 1970, p. 216; Lane, *RDAC* 1986, p. 200 and Pl. XLIII, nos. 3-4.

The lamp is of apparent Hellenistic date and is preserved entire. It bears the inscription Σαβαζίῳ, incised before firing.

Corrigenda to volume II

The major thing needing correction in volume II is a number of false cross-references, occasioned by the fact that numerous renumberings took place between the submission of the manuscript and its final publication:

p. 33, at end of no. 67, read 57 (not 55)

p. 39, description of no. 81, read 80 (not 64)

p. 40, description of no. 84, read 83 (not 69)

p. 44, description of no. D1, read 84 (not 69)

Other errors in both volumes are of a minor nature, easily corrected by users of the books.

APPENDIX

SABAZIUS AND THE SO-CALLED SNAKE-VESSELS

Prof. M. J. Vermaseren, in the first volume of this set, claims only two craters for Sabazius, namely those listed as I, 15bis a and b, found in an unquestionably Sabazian context in a house in Pompeii. There exist, however, other vessels with similar adornment, which have with considerable probability been connected with Sabazius-cult. Notable among these are those from the Roman sites of Augusta Raurica and Vindonissa, both in Switzerland.[1] The Vindonissa example is probably to be dated to the last quater of the first century A.D. It has three handles, all orginally surmounted by small shallow vessels, as in the Pompeii examples. In the areas between the handles are what appear to be stylized ivy plants. There also exist from the same site fragments of other pots[2] with representations of frogs and lizards, something which makes them, if anything, more likely than the preserved pot to be connected with Sabazius.[3]

The vase of Augusta Raurica has to my knowledge never been adequately illustrated.[4] It shows three Sabazian animals, the snake (three times, one on each of the handles), the frog, and the turtle (twice). It also has small vessels on top of each of its three handles.[5]

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[1] The latter is illustrated by R. Fellmann, *Studien zur Religion und Kultur Kleinasiens*, Leiden, 1978, I, Pl. 107, and discussed p. 287, 290 ff.

[2] *Ibid.*, Pl. 108.

[3] On the other hand, the votive hand illustrated by Fellmann on Pl. 106 cannot have been in the position of the *benedictio latina* and is rightly excluded by Vermaseren from *CCIS* I. The caducei of Pl. 109, 6 belong directly to Hermes/Mercury, and are to be connected with Sabazius only insofar as Sabazius is associated with that god. The offering woman of Pl. 109, 7 is only tenuously to be connected with Sabazius, and at that by taking seriously the anti-Sabazius testimony of the Christian authors as to the extreme importance of the snake in his cult.

[4] I know of only the sketch in E. Swoboda, *ÖJh* 30, 1936/7, p. 1, fig. 1b, which, although unlabeled, seems intended to reproduce this pot.

[5] It is most recently discussed, again by R. Fellmann, in *Die orientalischen Religionen in Römerreich*, Leiden, 1981, together with sherds from the same place and from Aventicum (noted for its Sabazius-hands, I, 47 and 48), and the Vindonissa pot. Some of the sherds from Augusta Raurica show a ram-headed but snake-bodied creature, which is rather to be referred to Celtic religion. This ram-headed snake accompanies various Celtic gods, notably the cross-legged, antlered Cernunnus, who is known from the famous Gundestrup cauldron and from many other monuments. See P. P. Bober, *AJA* 55, 1951, 13-51, for a thorough treatment of this god. Of course, since both the snake and the ram were sacred to Sabazius, it is possible that when Sabazius-cult moved into Celtic lands, a certain similarity between the two divinities was perceived by the worshippers. Other links between Sabazius and Cernunnus include the association of both of them with Hermes/Mercury, and the rat or mouse. We have already mentioned the Reims Cernunnus relief (fig. 13 in Bober's article) in our attempt to explain the presence of a mouse on the Sabazius-plaque II, 80.

A considerable older literature exists concerning these vases and what god they are to be assigned to. Certain of them were already claimed for Sabazius, e.g., by F. Staehelin.[6] However, an article by E. Swoboda in 1937[7] wished to claim all of them for Mithras-cult and has generally been followed by scholars and museum directors. Only R. Fellmann has remained with the older position that some of them belong to Sabazius.

Swoboda, who particularly mentions the Augst example,[8] finds his principal reason for rejecting the connection with Sabazius in that he takes the Christian authors Clement, Arnobius, and Firmicus Maternus in all seriousness and thinks the snake too important in Sabazius-cult for its relative unimportance on the vessels. However, the finding of Sabazius-vessels in Pompeii, unknown to Swoboda, and the general resemblance of the Vindonissa and especially the Augst vessel to them and to general Sabazius-iconography, prove Swoboda wrong.[9]

Criteria remain to be established, based on iconography, to allow us to determine which gods these vessels are to be attributed to. In the fragmentary state of many of them, this may well be difficult. It goes beyond the scope of this study to treat this problem exhaustively. The author, however, does consider the matter worthy of serious attention, and thus saw fit to include at least this appendix on it.

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[6] *Die Schweiz in römischer Zeit*[2], 1931, p. 513 ff.; [3], 1948, p. 553; *non vidi.*

[7] Die Schlange im Mithraskult, *ÖJh* 30, 1936/7, pp. 1-27. It has the virtue of giving a complete list of the snake-vessels known to that time.

[8] *op. cit.* p. 12 ff.

[9] That is, of course, not to say that there are no Mithras-vessels. A beautiful, unquestionably Mithraic vessel, for instance, is published by W. Binsfeld in *Kölner Jahrbücher* 6, 1960-1, p. 67 ff. and Pl. 16.

INDEX OF SELECTED WORDS, NAMES, AND TOPICS

Adonis 1, 19, 51
Aelian 23-25
Aera Cura 13, 20
Aeschines 2, 3, 8 note 17, 52, 53
Africa 11, 14, 39
Agdistis, Angdistis 2, 16, 19
Alexander Polyhistor 9, 38, 40, 57
Alexander Severus 12
Amphitheos of Heraclea 3, 52-57
Annia Faustina, empress 21
Antiochus I of Commagene 27 note 20
Antistes 43
Antoninus Pius 15
Apollo 15, 26, 32, 34 note 37, 41-42, 45
— Smintheus 26
Apuleius 2, 19, 38, 41, 58
Aquae Calidae 13
aquae instrumentum 20, 36
Argos 32, 38, 42
Aristophanes 1, 2, 4, 32, 40, 50-52, 55-58
Arnobius 39 note 3, 59-60, 65
Arrian 56
Artaxerxes II 2
Artemidorus 53, 58
Artemis Anaeitis 18, 28, 36, 41, 47
Asclepius 15, 46, 53, 58
Athena Nikephoros 5, 20, 46
Athenaios, of Pergamum 5, 6, 14, 43
Athens, Athenians 4, 7-8, 15, 33, 39, 46
Attalus II 5
Attalus III 5, 6, 14, 27 note 20
Attis 3, 15-16, 30, 53, 56, 58
Augusta Raurica, Augst 64-65
Aventicum, Avenches 17, 44, 64 note 5
axe 28

Belalis Major 14
Bellona 2, 19
Bes 24
Bithynia 41-42
boar 25, 44
bread 30-32, 34

Cabiri 54
Caelestis 12, 15, 20-21, 47
Campania 10, 12
Cappadocia 5, 56
Casinum 38, 43
Celsus 59
Cernunnus 26, 64 note 5
Christianity, Christians 24-26, 32-34, 39, 47, 59, 64 note 3, 65
Cibyra 19
Cicero 3, 51, 55, 57
Clement of Alexandria 39 note 3, 59-60, 65
confessional steles 18, 29, 41
craters, ceremonial vessels 30-31, 34-35, 47
crows, ravens 26
Cybele 2, 15-17, 19, 25-26, 29-30, 35, 56
Cyprus 8, 36-37, 46, 54, 61, 62, 63

Dacia 11, 42, 45
Dalmatia 11-12, 41-42
Damascius 57-59
Dangstetten 9, 44
Dea Syria 2, 19
Delos 11, 15, 42, 45, 47
Demeter 19
Demosthenes 2, 3, 8 note 17, 14, 51-52, 54-55, 57-59
dendrophorus 17
Diodorus Siculus 3, 55-56, 59
Dionysus 3, 13-15, 17-18, 26, 30-31, 38-39, 43, 46, 51, 52-59 (see also Liber Pater)
— Kathegemon 5, 14
Dioscuri 15-17, 22
Dis Pater 13, 20
dolphin 26
Dow, Sterling 8 note 17, 46
dreams 42

eagles 11, 13, 26-27
Egypt, Egyptians 24-25, 47
Elagabalus 21
Eleusis, Eleusinian mysteries 4, 34, 53
Emona 15, 43, 46
Equites Singulares Augusti 12, 38, 44, 46
Etymologicum Gudianum 3, 56
Etymologicum Magnum 3, 39 note 3, 56
Eumenes II 5-6
Eustathius 3, 56

Faunus 33 note 36
Fiano Romano 20
Firmicus Maternus 59, 65
Fortuna 20
frog, toad 23-25, 64

Gaul 11
Germany 11-12

Gordian III 46
grain 30-31
grammar, uneducated 45
grapes 30-31

hairpins 36
Harpocration 3, 53-54, 55, 57
Hecate 33, 59
Heket 24
Hera 26
Herculaneum 10, 23
Hercules, Heracles 15-16, 26
Hermes, Mercury 13, 15-17, 20, 22, 24, 27, 38, 42, 46, 64 notes 3 and 5
Hesychius 3, 55
Hipta, Mother Hipta 3, 17-18, 20, 29, 39, 42, 47, 55

Iamblichus 57, 59
Iicus 41
Italy 11, 39, 42, 47

Jews, Judaism 9 note 18, 26, 39, 50, 55, 58
Josephus 50
Juno Sospita 33 note 36
Jupiter, see Zeus
— Dolichenus 12, 44, 46
— Optimus Maximus 12, 17, 44

knife, dagger 34-35
Köln 44
Koloe, Kula 42, 47
Kore, Persephone 20, 54, 59
Korybantes 1, 54 note 6, 57-58

ladders 33
lamps 37, 46, 54, 62-63
Liber Pater 15, 30
Liguria 44
lions 16, 26, 29
lizards 23-24, 27, 64
Lucian 58-59
Lydia 2, 18, 36, 41, 43
Lydus, John 3, 55, 57

Ma 2, 19
Macrobius 3, 9, 21 note 18, 38-39, 51, 57
Maeonia 28, 47
Mars 15-16
Mater Idaea 2, 19
Men 11, 22, 25, 28, 30, 30-41, 59
Mithras, Mithraism 15, 21-22, 26, 36, 41, 58-59, 65
Mnaseas of Patara 3, 54-55, 57
Moesia 11, 12, 38, 39, 40, 42, 45, 47, 59
Mogontiacum, Mainz 12, 44
moon 21, 27, 34
mother-and-child scene 26-27, 35, 54
musical instruments 14, 32, 35, 50
Musonius Rufus 15
Mylasa 15-16, 42, 46, 62

Nea Aule 12, 41
Neo-Phrygian inscriptions 49 note 2
Nicopolis ad Istrum 11, 13, 16-17, 21, 38-39, 41
noisemakers 18, 32, 34

Origen 39 note 3, 56, 59
Ormeleis 13-14, 43-44, 46
Orphic Hymns 3, 18-19, 55-57, 60
Ostia 15, 21, 46

Paphos 8, 62-63
Pergamum 5-9, 11, 20, 27, 35, 42, 45-46, 50
phallus 29
Philadelphia Lydiae 12, 28
Philo 50
Photius 3, 56
Phrygia, Phrygians 1, 22, 50-51, 54-55
pigeons, doves 18, 20, 26, 29, 36
pine-cones 30, 34-35, 36 note 38, 65
Piraeus 7, 9, 45-46
Pliny the Elder 26
plow 29-30
Plutarch 3, 55, 58
Pompeii 10, 22, 29, 31-32, 35, 47, 64-65
Praeneste 16
priesthood for life 43
processions 27, 35
Proclus 22, 59
Psellus, Michael 56-57, 60
purse 32, 53

ram 23, 25, 61
rat, mouse 26, 34
Rhodes 6-7, 9, 45-46
Rome, Romans 6, 8-9, 11-13, 19, 20, 25, 36, 38, 41-42, 44, 58

sacerdos 43
Samothrace, Samothracian mysteries 4, 54 note 6
sanctus 19, 41
Sarapis 11
Sardinia 36
Sardis 2, 4, 6, 11, 16-17, 19, 47, 50
scales 33-35
scholia, scholiasts 3, 51-52, 57
Selene 21
Septuagint 50
Sikinos 8

Silvanus 15-16
snakes 4, 15, 23, 27, 34, 53, 59, 64
snake-vessels 29, 31-32, 64-65
Sol Invictus 21
Souidas 3, 56
Spain 14
spelling, of Sabazius' name 38-39
— uneducated 45
spoons, ladles 33, 35
staffs, scepters 34
stars 16, 21-22
Strabo 3, 54, 57
Stratonice of Pergamum 5-8, 45
Suessula 12
sun, sun-god, Helios 11, 21-22, 34, 41, 58 (see also Sol Invictus)
Syracuse 7

Tacitus 50
temple slaves 18 (see also ἱερόδουλος)
Teos 7, 9, 45-46
Theophrastus 4, 53, 58-59
Thera 8
Thrace, Thracians 1, 9-10, 13, 38, 40-46, 51-52, 59
Tiberius 8
Tlos 6-7, 42
Tomis 29
trees 18, 28, 30, 36
turtles 23-24, 27

Valerius Maximus 8-9, 55, 58, 60
Vespasian 9-10
Venus, Aphrodite 19, 28
Vibia, kinswoman of Vincentius 13, 45
Vincentius, priest of Sabazius 13, 20, 43, 45
Vindonissa 64
Viterbo 41, 44

whip 32
wine 30-32, 34-35
worshippers, female 40, 45
— military 44

Zeus, Jupiter 5-6, 9, 11, 13, 16, 18, 45-46, 53, 55-56, 60
— Ammon 25
— Baradates 2, 19
— Koryphaios 12

'Αθυπαρηνός 41
'Αρσιληνός 11, 41

βουλευτής 45

ἐπήκοος 40
ἐπιμελητής 44
ἐπιμήνιος 44
ἐπιστάτης 44

Ἥλιος 11

θεὰ Ἰδεία 16

ἱερεύς 43, 51
ἱερόδουλος 18, 36, 43

Κολοηνῶν κατοικία 13, 22, 27
κορνικουλάριος 45
κύριος 11

Μητρικός 40
μισθωτής 44
μύστης 43-44, 46

οἶκος 36
ὅσιος καὶ δίκαιος 41

Παγισαρανός 41
πραγματευτής 44
προφητεία 62
πυρφόρος 15, 43

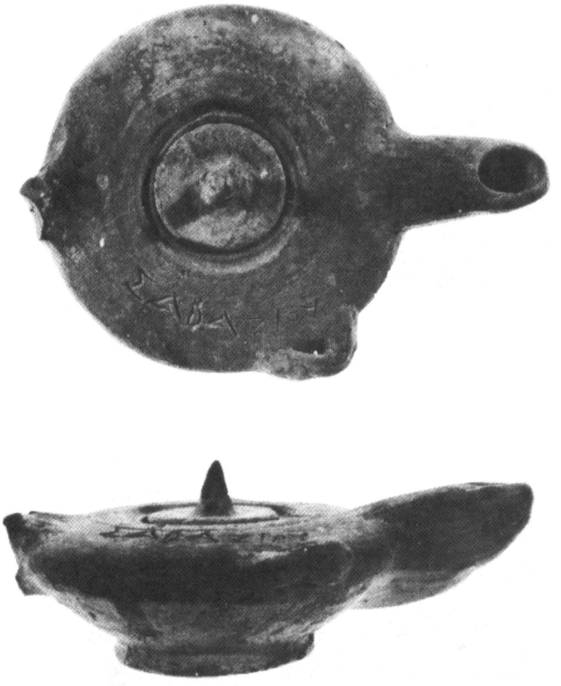
ῥαψωδός 32

Σαβαζιασταί 7, 44, 46
στεφανηφόρος 28

ψιλὸς τόπος 36

A1

CCIS I, 27



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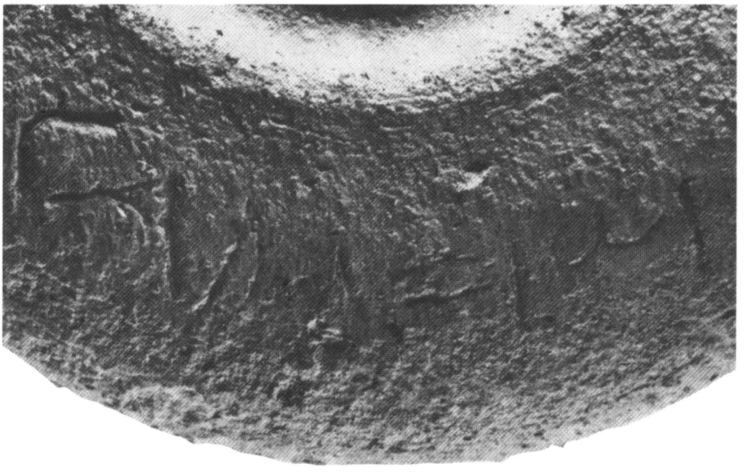
A5



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